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SUBHAS CHANDRA

BY

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**JYOTI PROKASALAYA
206, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.**

Published by—Jyotirmoy Ghosh
BHARAT BOOK AGENCY
206, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

Rs. 6/- six only

First published in July, 1946.

Cover-design—Frobbat Karmokar.

Printed by—
S. N Banerjee, M.A.
MANASI PRESS
73, Manicktala Street,
Calcutta.

TO

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

**WHOSE IDEAL FIRST INSPIRED SRI SUBHAS
CHANDRA BOSE IN THE SPIRIT
OF SERVICE, DETERMINATION
AND PATRIOTISM FROM
HIS BOYHOOD.**

HEMENDRANATH DAS-GUPTA

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NOTE :—**Chapter—IV**

In page 102, para 2, line 2, read *1929* and not 1927.

In page 140, line 19, read *January 2, 1932*, and not June 2.

Chapter—VII

In page 198, line 9, read 8 P. M. in place of 1-25 A. M.

PREFACE

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose whose name is a byword in the whole of the world to-day, was *our* Subhas when he first came to the field of work under our Great Leader—Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. From 1921 to 1924 I used to meet him constantly and had a great opportunity of studying him as I saw him.

From 1927—1931, I used to meet him now and again and on momentous occasions, but not constantly.

From 1932—1938, I met him sparingly, although he honoured me twice by coming to Deshbandhu Balika Vidyalaya, which I have been the Founder-Secretary of. He expressed that of all schools he saw, this was the best to his choice and wanted to convert it to a *Thoroughly National Institution*.

From 1939 to 1941, I did not perhaps meet him except in Public Meetings.

As towards the last period of his life in India upto 1941, I was not in direct touch with him, I had no idea of writing anything about so great a personality and reserved it for those who worked devotedly with him during that time. Of late however so many friends and countrymen desired me to give an accurate version of his life and activities in their true colours, that I have taken upon myself the task of writing this short book. I have attempted to depict him 'as

I saw and have tried my best not to sacrifice truth under any circumstances. Whether I have been successful or not, History alone is the real judge.

For the Presidency College affair, which I have dealt with rather elaborately, I am grateful, amongst others, to Mr. Bholanath Roy, Advocate, High Court. He has supplied me with various materials too. I am also grateful to Mr. Parmananda Datta, Joint Editor *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Prof. Promotha Sarkar, Prof. Hemanta Kumar Sarkar and others.

I have been greatly helped by my esteemed friends and brothers Mr. Bhupendra Das (Ex. M.H.R., Rangoon and Advocate High Court) and Prof. Jites Ch. Guha of the ¹Vidyasagar College who helped me greatly in this work. Mr. Sudhir Kumar Mitra, Secretary *Bangabhasa 'Sanskriti Sammilan* also assisted me considerably. My thanks are due to them.

For the blocks and other facilities I am grateful to the authorities of '*Bangasree*', notably Sriyuts Devendranath Bhattacharya, Amulyabhusan Chatterji, Sailendranath Sen and Rabi Bhattacharya.

'May this little work inspire real love for country and a spirit of sacrifice to our youngmen'—is my only prayer.

—*Bande Mataram*—

124-5-B, Russa Road, Calcutta. }
Rath-Jatra—1353 B.S. }

**HEMENDRANATH
DAS-GUPTA.**

INTRODUCTORY

The year 1921 was the busiest and the most momentous year of our national awakening since the inception of the Indian National Congress. No doubt the Rowlatt Act Agitation, Satyagraha, externment of Mahatma Gandhi from Delhi and detention at Muttra and last of all the Jalianwallabag massacre stirred up the agitation throughout the length and breadth of the country in 1919, but the subsequent stages which put the country to the great ordeal also, are worthy of being carefully noticed. The next Congress Session met at Amritsar in 1919 and yet Mahatmaji with his characteristic peace-loving spirit stood up for co-operation and acceptance of the Reforms introduced by the Government of India Act of 1919, but when things came to such a pass that Hunter's Committee rather white-washed the merciless acts of Sir Michael O'Dwyer (Lieutenant Governor of Punjab) and General Dyer who ordered general firing on the innocent and unarmed people that had gathered in the small park and when Moslem India smarted under the wrongs done to the Khalifa, Mahatma Gandhi hastened to sponsor his Non-Co-operation resolution, and succeeded in getting it passed by the Special Session of the Congress in September, 1920 at Calcutta.

Three months passed, but there was little response in the country, particularly in Bengal. No doubt Pandit Motilal Nehru gave up his roaring practice but as an old and very successful lawyer he was considered rather to have retired from long and strenuous work. The provisions of the resolution also made even "the head of the president of the Special Session, Lala Lajpat Rai to reel", as he said. In Bengal no doubt a few people showed some enthusiasm but they had little stake in the country. It was apprehended that Non-Co-operation, however ingenious a weapon, did not produce the desired effect and the Bengal Presidency which since 1901 had been the inspirer of all nationalistic movements in the country began to go moribund. Mr. C. R. Das was then the accredited leader of Bengal and everybody looked to him as the man who only could tackle the problem and give the right lead. But he ran counter to the Calcutta resolution which was passed by majority no doubt, but votes did not mean work. Then came the Nagpur Congress and the historic declaration of Das's giving up practice and joining the Non-Co-operation movement. People looked askance and asked, "If it is real, what does it mean?" Yes, it meant a great deal.

Das was the ablest lawyer of the Calcutta High Court at that time. Members of his

profession were no match for him and even Messrs. Jackson, Norton and Garth, the ablest the Bar could produce, found themselves at their wits' end if Mr. Das stood as their adversary. He commanded a fabulous income of eight lacs a year and the briefs for Rajas and Maharajas used to come to him first. In Criminal cases too, even the most unbending judges fought shy of him. Such was C. R. Das, the great luminary of the legal profession of India.

But Mr. Das was not simply a lawyer, he represented the best and worthiest culture of India—a poet, a conversationalist, a devotee of Sree Gouranga and above all a highly charitable person. The popular belief ran that none went disappointed from his house without getting his desire fulfilled. He used to give as he earned and was thus never above want. He was a friend of the poor—a *Dinabandhu*.

Above all he was large-hearted and had breadth of vision. He could probe into the soul of Bengal and thus captured its imagination. He was already the leader of Bengal. So when such a man threw off the robes of a barrister and came to the level of the masses, the news of the Himalayan sacrifice caught the country by storm. The sensation was electric and everybody was up and doing to follow him and join his banner. Students left Colleges, lawyers suspended

practice and even holders of lucrative government posts left service. It was felt that Bengal of 1905 would lead again in 1921. He was no longer C. R. Das, but became *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan*.

Within two months, Bengal's quota as regards Tilak Swaraya Fund and enlistment of members was fulfilled. Charkas (spinning wheels) too came up near the requisite number. A decent and fairly big house in Calcutta was taken up on a monthly rent of Rs. 2000/- of that time and both the office of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the National College were located there.

The general meeting of the newly elected members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was held when amongst other things *Deshbandhu* was criticised by some so-called orthodox followers of Non-Co-operation for helping strikers in their distress during Assam Bengal Railway and Steamer employees' strike in sympathy with the poor coolies who had left tea-gardens for oppression committed on them. There was another matter for which invectives on him at the above meeting were rather caustic and that was because he allowed Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta then under arrest at Chittagong and Mr. Basanta Kumar Majumder at Goalundo to be released on bail. No doubt he had his points carried by overwhelming majority, but he

scented trouble and saw that resistance would always come from a set of members whose only work would be to thwart him. Thus while his enthusiasm continued to be unabated, he felt however, that reason or no reason, a party would never cease obstructing him in his work in future.

At such a time when such thoughts used to worry him now and again, came the news that Subhas Chandra Bose who had just passed the Civil Service Examination would throw up the job and join him under his banner as a worker. Deshbandhu felt highly relieved and began to watch the date when the precious soul would come to his presence. Subhas came towards the middle of July (1921) and threw himself heart and soul under the lead and guidance of Deshbandhu. Subhas too cherished the highest regards for Deshbandhu as a master, inspiration and guide. It was here that our acquaintance began and intimacy grew up while working for the common cause. The following pages will only describe the life and activities of Subhas in his struggle for independence and show how far Subhas was influenced by the great personality of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.

SUBHAS CHANDRA

FIRST CHAPTER

Early career—as a student in India

Sree Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897. This is the year when Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen Empress was celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. In other respects however, it was a "Black Year" for the Indian People. Famine, plague and earth-quake brought death, devastation and suffering and what was greater the plague regulations at Poona and Bombay were stringent and pursued ruthlessly with a vengeance. Panic prevailed everywhere and Messrs. Rand and Ayrst were shot dead at Poona on the night of the Jubilee Celebration. The offence was traced to two middle class Brahmins and Natu brothers were deported.

Above all Srijut Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the reputed Editor of 'Marhatta' and 'Keshari' was put under arrest, tried for sedition and sentenced to 18 months' R. I. Tilak from that time became an avowed Nationalist leader, and if not the whole of India, Maharastra and Bengal followed his lead. The year of Subbas's birth was thus marked by the incarceration.

and prominence of a leader whose differences with the Congress-Executive were marked ten years after, by the breaking up of a Congress Session at Surat and the growth of the extremist section which again, after ten years, became the only recognised political party of the Congress and is still so upto this day.

At such a year when the Bengal Provincial Conference too was dispersed owing to a devastating earth-quake which made hundreds homeless, Subhas was born at Cuttack, in the house of a Rai Bahadur and Government Pleader. But the father Babu Janaki Nath Bose was a decent man and people spoke well of him, his temper and manners. Subhas also was fortunate in getting a good and affectionate mother. He was the sixth of the sons, all of whom were given good and decent education by the father, a man of culture, and were trained with care by him. The first of the sons is Sriji Satish Chandra Bose, Bar-at-law and a member of the Legislative Assembly of Bengal. The second is Sji. Sarat Chandra Bose, a leading Barrister of Calcutta and a first class debater and is now the leader of the Congress party of the Central Assembly, Delhi. Political suffering of Sarat Babu is well-known. The third brother is Babu Suresh Chandra Bose who was formerly a Deputy Magistrate, but resigned of his own accord and is now an



**Family group, from the left :—
Sudhir Chandra, Satis Chandra, Sunil Chandra, Janaki Nath
Bose with Salles Chandra on the lap, Subhas Chandra,
Sarat Chandra and Suresh Chandra**

Assessor of the Improvement Trust Tribunal, Calcutta, the fourth is Babu Sudhir Chandra Bose, an officer in the Tata Iron and Steel Company at Jamshedpur, the fifth is the eminent physician Dr. Sunil Chandra Bose, specialist in Heart-Complaints. Subhas comes next and is the sixth. The seventh is Babu Sailesh Chandra Bose, a Textile Engineer at Bombay. There was another son Sontosh who too was also well-placed at Jamboda but died a premature death.

Subhas's ancestral house is at Kodalia (24 Parganas) twelve miles from Calcutta to the south. Kodalia, Chingripota and Harinavi are places of men of culture. Subhas's Calcutta residence is at 38/2, Elgin Road which has been visited by hundreds and is well-known to all.

When a boy of seven, Subhas was admitted to the European Protestant School at Cuttack where he read upto the age of twelve. Thereafter he joined the Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack, of which the Headmaster was Babu Beni Madhab Das. In the year 1913 he passed the Matriculation Examination from the same school standing second in order of merit. Out of 700 marks he got 611, 2 marks less than what Babu Pramatha Nath Sarkar who stood first, got, and 2 marks more than what Professor Priya Ranjan Sen, M.A., P.R.S., who stood third, had obtained.

As a student at Cuttack he was inspired by the spirit of service as followed by the Sanyasees of the *Ramkrishna Mission* who now and again came to the house of Babu Hari Ballav Bose and his son Ram Krishna Bose of Cuttack with whom Janaki Babu was very intimate. Subhas came also under the influence of Babu Hem Chandra Sarkar, M.A., who worked as a Professor of English Literature in Krishnagar, Rajshahi and Cuttack Colleges. Hem Babu loved not only his own pupils but also students in general with whom he came in contact and formed them into a band for serving people in distress. Subhas belonged to this band of workers for service of the poor and the destitute.

After having passed the Matriculation Examination Subhas took his admission into the Presidency College, Calcutta. He was here two years in the I.A. classes and one year (may be a little less) in the B.A. Third Year Class. From Calcutta he used to go now and again to Krishnagar to meet his friend Babu Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, with whom during his College days he was bound with closest ties of friendship. Hemanta Babu was introduced to Subhas through a letter from Headmaster Beni Babu and though reading in the same class at Krishnagar he was more intimate than any other friend at Calcutta.

or Cuttack. Subhas's letters to Hemanta Babu give an idea of his bent of mind at the time.

In 1914, both Hemanta and Subhas left home in search of a *Guru* (Spiritual Guide) and went to Hardwar, Hrishikesh, Lachman Jhola, Mathura, Brindaban and Benares. At Kanakhal they met Swami Brahmananda who asked them to go back, as they came without parents' permission. They did not find any one as their Guru and came back home to the joy of their parents. After that Subhas suffered from Typhoid fever and became very weak. In 1915 he appeared at the I. A. Examination and got a first class.

The Great War broke out in 1914, and hundreds of youngmen were arrested of whom a large number were put under detention without trial. There is no gain-saying the fact that there were a number of secret societies in existence at the time, some of which were implicated in acts of terrorism. Attempts from different sources were not wanting to wean away Subhas, a highly brilliant and daring youngman and son of rich parents, and convert him to their views, but the influence of Vivekananda, whose ideal he accepted as the guiding spirit in his life, helped to keep himself away from such activities. He however used to mix with Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, M. L. A. who was then a Medical student

staying at 3, Mirzapore Street and liked to be in the midst of the little band he was trying to form for the service of the sick and the wounded. The author of this book saw Subhas now and again also at No. 1, Chowranghee Lane in 1915 and 1916 where Subhas and Messrs. Bepin Dey and Rabin Banerjee (afterwards I.C.S.) used to come. They used to mix intimately with Babu Aswini Kumar Roy, a B.L. student, who lived there and Babu Tarok Chandra Das Gupta who was tutor and guardian to a boy Zamindar. Subhas used to speak little but was warm in discussions. Reserved he was, but he was never unsociable or puffed up. He was sympathetic to the poor and used to collect now and again with others handfuls of rice—*mustibhiksha* to help people in distress.

From his early life he began to think seriously and after he had joined the B.A. Classes, his power of reasoning began to develop more and more. Those around him began to feel that he was not simply a fashionable thinker, but one who would take up the path of Vivekananda sooner or later. He began to think as a disciple of Swamiji in that a real man must be an embodiment of the past, a product of the present and a prophet of the future.

In the present book we would not, however, discuss

what he was thinking all the while about, but what he was doing and how he was working throughout.

In the College activities he used to take a leading part and was one of the organisers of the Presidency College Magazine, of which the first editor was the present Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, Mr. Pramathanath Banerjee, and the Registrar Mr. Jogeshchandra Chakrabarty assistant editor. Subhas was correspondent for Seminars and Societies. The magazine first came out in November, 1914.

His next work was in connection with the Flood and Famine Relief Committee of which he was a Secretary. It was at this time that distress was acute at Bankura owing to famine resulting from drought, and Subhas did his best to collect money and organise men for the help of the place.

He was also a member of the Students' Consultative Committee as the only representative of his class (3rd year B.A.). This body which consisted of 19 members (representatives of all the College-classes) had for its function to advise and assist in the mediation of affairs between the Principal and students of the College. Mr. Bholanath Roy, (now an advocate, Calcutta High Court) then reading in the 5th year class, Arts, was the Secretary of the Committee.

But the most noticeable thing is that Subhas was .

expelled for taking a leading part in the assault on Mr. E. F. Oaten, a professor of the College. The expulsion was certainly ordered by the Principal of the College, Mr. H. R. James, and his studies were suspended for the time being. In later years he used always to gloat over this incident. He has often expressed that when the Principal communicated the order by giving the epithet as "the greatest mischief-maker", he considered that day as the most memorable day for his life. But how could the order of Mr. James, who was one of the most popular Principals of the Presidency College—affectionate, helpful, considerate, be passed without sufficient reasons, and how could the beating of a professor be justified, unless under very exceptional circumstances—especially a professor who had been spoken of well by many students, and how is it that even upto the age of his mature judgment, instead of repentance, satisfaction sustained him all through and Subhas considered that as the turning point of his life? The incidents require elucidation and we would therefore offer apology to our readers for the narration which may take a little more space. But before going to the events the trend of mind of these two professors needs a little scanning.

As I said before, Mr. James was always popular with the Indian students during his career as a professor in India for more than twenty years. First he was at

the Patna College where the present writer saw him always mixing with the students and taking part in College debates, as well as in games of football and cricket. In the Presidency College too he was equally, if not more, popular and used to take boys to restaurants and at times gave them lessons on various outside matters including the sport of Boxing. The ex-students in general and most of the students of the time could not conceive of any thing wrong with Mr. James who was always a friend and guide of students. But with the efflux of time this mentality got a shock and underwent considerable change. The new consciousness in the people of India since 1905 to the present times*, was not pleasing even to the well-meaning Englishmen. Mr. James, too, however impartial and however genuinely he considered the students' interest as his interest, could not forget the blessings the British Government poured on India, "in being the guarantee and protection for the blessings of civil order, prosperity, education, and culture over the vast tracts of earth's surface." He is

-
- * 1905 Partition of Bengal & Boycott of British goods.
 - 1906 Samities formed.
 - 1907 Students' activities during Ardhoday Joga, Attempts on the life of the Dacca Magistrate.
 - 1908 Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Trial.
 - 1910 Dacca Conspiracy Case, Howrah Gang Conspiracy Case.
 - 1914 Delhi Conspiracy Case, Raja Bazar Conspiracy Case.

thus said to have advised his students in the course of a speech delivered to his students on August 25, 1914 in the following way :

“One thing that Patriotism in Bengal should not do, is to direct the national spirit into an attitude of hostility to British rule. There would be something I should call patricidal in such an attitude....Things have not always been happy during the recent years.”

This was the spirit in which the events of the last few years previous to the time he was addressing the students were looked up by Englishmen even of Mr. James's type.

I shall also quote another instance when Mr. James in reviewing “the Education Problem of India” a very valuable contribution for educationists (by Sir Gooroodas Banerjee) gave a bit of his mind.

In Sir Gooroo Das's opinion “European Professors treated their Indian pupils with kindness and when occasion arose for severity of treatment, it was a loving severity and their pupils in return showed them affectionate reverence. But unhappily the state of things now is quite different.”

Sir Gooroodas's observation Mr. James termed a fallacy, and he hastened to reply as follows :

“There is no doubt that students now-a-days are

more sensitive, more exacting, less willing to give and take, less ready to interpret in good part. They too often view their European professors through a mist created by patriotic oratory, by foolish talk of the colour-line in education and the deliberate slanders of certain Calcutta newspapers. The wonder rather is that there is so much good will left. And there is great deal on both sides.* In the light of this change of the angle of vision, it will be not difficult for our readers to probe into his mind and pass a judgment upon the attitude taken by this good and able professor in the happenings of our discussion.

The attitude of Mr. E. F. Oaten was rather quite different. He too was a competent professor but unlike Mr. James, was of an imperialistic turn of mind. He always held the view that Britishers are in this country only to help the uplifting of the ignorant or 'savage' Indian people ! A few words of his speech in the Eden Hindu Hostel delivered about that time, which made even a favourite student of his—the Managing Editor of the College Magazine, Mr. Chakraborty, to criticise, ran thus :—

“As the mission of the Greeks was to Hellenise the barbarian people with whom they came into

*Vide P. C. Magazine, Vol. I, No. I, Nov. 1914, pp. 33.

contact, the mission of the English people has also been to civilise the Indian people.”

This was the spirit with which he used to treat students and like Negroes who were sometimes loved by whites, his pupils were also loved by him.

Over and above that, he was possessed of a certain idiosyncrasy which made him to take offence at trifles. When the College bell was to strike, he used to get startled. When a tram car sounded its warning bell, he felt disturbed. On one occasion when Dr. P. Mukherjee was teaching in a neighbouring class, noise came from students which at once brought Mr. Oaten away from his room and he asked his colleague Dr. Mukherjee to inflict fines on all the students of the class.

Such was Mr. Oaten, and trouble with him of an unusual nature arose in the college. There were two occurrences in the college, one on the 10th January and the other on the 15th February, 1916.

With regard to the first, the story is given below in *Subhas's own words*.

The story as written at a stretch by Subhas was in his own words—English is very simple and the style unornamental. We have got it from Mr. Bholanath Roy, M.A., B.L., Advocate, High Court. Mr. Roy was Secretary of the Consultative Committee and a student of the 5th year class, Arts. A word or two here and there, was added to by Mr. Roy. It runs as follows :

The Presidency College, Thiruvallur - a bridge

London

On May Day some 50-60 students of that school
hundred Hain schools were belonging to the school. The
were invited to the school for a social gathering.
many. The meeting lasted about 2-3 hours. The
and the students were returning. They had been
informed previously that Prof. R. K. Mohan was
take his leave (from 12 to 1 o'clock) but
Hindu school of the, but the students were
that as the school was closed, the students
were not able to attend the meeting.

Portions of the version in Subj's own hand.

The Presidency College trouble—a true version.

"On Monday some 8 or 10 ex-students of the Hindu and Hare schools now belonging to the 3rd year B. A. class were invited to the school Prize Distribution ceremony. The meeting broke up at about 12-15 p. m. and the students were returning. They had been informed previously that Prof. R. N. Ghosh would not take his English class (from 12 to 1 o'clock). But while returning they met the steward who informed them that as Mr. Ghose had come, he would probably take his class. As they were passing along the corridor of the room in which Mr. Oaten was teaching, Mr. Oaten came out, obstructed them, catching one or two by the hand and insultingly ordered them to go away. The students most becomingly went down with the intention of applying to the Principal. In the meantime the students already assembled in the 3rd year class room. Seeing that it was twentyfive minutes passed twelve, they thought of going down to inform the Professor. When they were coming they were met by Mr. Oaten who threatened them with a fine of 5 Rupees if they left the room before one o'clock and sent them back in the same insulting manner though they informed him of their intention and assured him that they would not make any noise. A little before 12-35 p. m. Prof. Ghosh came and formally dismissed the class. The students asked him if they could go down in spite of Mr. Oaten's threat, with Prof. Ghose's permission, to which he replied in the affirmative. The students while coming away were met by Mr. Oaten and told him that their class was dismissed and they would undertake to make no noise. In spite of this, Mr. Oaten ordered them to go back and wait till one o'clock and adding injury to verbal insult actually gave them rough pushes. The students went back. At one o'clock Mr. Oaten went to them and added some more threats saying that a Prof. had the power to fine students. He regretted that power was not utilised so long and said that henceforth it would be made use of.

"The students made an application to the Principal and the same day the Principal had a long talk with some of the aggrieved students and told them to withdraw the application and patch up the matter with Mr. Oaten. Personally three only agreed to see Mr. Oaten regarding the personal grievance but, the class as a whole did not. The next day the three students waited on Mr. Oaten but he could not unavoidably come. The class as a whole remained so dissatisfied on getting no promise of redress and the dissatisfaction spread so widely that the whole body of students refused to attend classes till their grievance was attended to. The strike lasted for two days and on the third day Mr. Oaten spoke to the students and brought the unpleasant incident to an end."

That the above version of Subhas was thoroughly accurate has also been corroborated by the report (which we shall call R') of a committee with Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee as Chairman, with this addenda, that Prof. Ghosh was himself obstructed by Mr. Oaten and was not allowed to go until the Bengali professor satisfied his colleague of his identity by an explanation. Secondly Subhas was one of the students who was given pushes and his books fell to the ground. Further, although Mr. Oaten apologised for giving pushes to students and although students admitted that they were technically wrong, the matter was amicably settled and Mr. Oaten was enthusiastically cheered, yet the matter did not really end there.

The students were technically wrong in the sense that there was no rule to pass by the corridor (back

verandah) when classes were held, but in view of the fact that not less than eighty lectures used to be delivered a day, the rule was observed more in breach, as the report (R) goes, than in observance.

The students who joined the strike were fined Rs. 5/- each by Mr. James and no remission was made in the case of any person unless he apologised. Many did not apologise.

There is also another matter worth-mentioning. After Mr. James had spoken very affectionately with the students on the 10th January and asked them to make up their differences with Mr. Oaten, he also wrote privately to Mr. Oaten to settle the matter. But the students did not know this and when some of the students outside grumbled as to how they could go and apologise to the very professor who had insulted them, even laying hands on some of them, two of them again entered the room of Mr. James and asked if they were to demand an apology from Mr. Oaten to which the Principal at once flew into a rage and burst out—
 “Apology ! get you away, rebels, you are all rebels ! Rest assured I shall help Mr. Oaten.”

Again the Report goes that on the third day, Mr. Oaten while holding his History classes drove away those pupils who had not attended his lectures on the

day of strike,—an act of indiscretion which Mr. James also spoke against, before the Committee of Enquiry.

Such was the state of feeling when students had a great grievance against Mr. James who, on the other hand, thought that the students were very ungrateful. This misunderstanding continued as Mr. James had not the opportunity of meeting the pupils, since he did not take up any classes, nor he called any body to his presence.

We should also have a trend of Subhas's own mind over matters in general about the time the strike was over. Thus did Subhas write to his friend Babu Hemanta Kumar Sarkar on date 1.2.16 :—

“India has now entered a new life. With the darkness of the New Moon being over, a light of dawn peeps through the sky of Indian fortune, and it cannot escape the vision of an Indian youth. Blessed are we that we are living in this auspicious hour and have got an opportunity of gathering fuel in the *Aswamedh* sacrifice. Cast off despair and look yonder to the new light before us, and follow it.”

Within a few days, there came another occasion when the misunderstanding reached its climax. On the 15th Feb. just a month after, when the pupils of the 1st year class, Science, were passing near by Mr. Oaten's class, as the teacher was absent,

he came out and threatened them not to chatter like monkeys. Mr. Oaten was next entering the class, and a very young boy Kamala Bose (now a Barrister) called a class-mate as 'Panchanon'. Mr. Oaten turned back and caught him by the neck, calling him rascal, and dragging him all the while to the steward and got the boy fined.

The news of this assault and indignity to the students again spread like wild fire and everywhere was seen an assemblage of students discussing over the incident. Report was made to the Principal who sent a note to Mr. Oaten asking him to see at 3 p.m. but that hour for hearing him did not come. What made the situation graver was that at the time of assault Mr. Oaten made some remarks on the character of orientals also. Then, at about half past two when Mr. Oaten was going down-stairs for fixing a notice on the board, he was kicked from behind by a student of the 5th year class, Science, who afterwards became a principal of a college and suffered after the incident for about a week from inflammation of the glands, staying at 1, Chowringhee Lane, the house of a friend of the writer. After Mr. Oaten had fallen on the ground, a batch of students (about 15 in number) was upon him and dealt him with blows and kicks. Subhas was in the party but he himself did not use any force, although he did not shirk his own responsibility for the

unfortunate happening. Whether he actually took any part or not, he shared the view of his companions. Immediately did Prof. Gilchrist arrive at the spot and raised Mr. Oaten from a state of unconsciousness. But before Mr. Gilchrist could come to the place, all had retired. The whole incident was finished in about 30 to 40 seconds.

Mr. James flew into a rage and shouted for blood of the culprits and reported immediately to the Government where senior member in charge of education was Mr. P. C. Lyon, I.C.S. (author of the well-known Lyon Circular of 1905). Mr. Lyon considered the situation so grave that he at once ordered the normal work of the college to be suspended from the 18th Feb., 1916.

Before this, Mr. James got two students Subhas Chandra Bose and Ananga Mohan Dam to be expelled, on the identification of a Durwan, for having taken part, as the charge against them ran, in the assault on Prof. Oaten. The identification was made in a queer manner. The Durwan fearing injury, was made to sit behind the purdah, and as each student after talking with members of the Governing body retired, the Durwan used to be called and asked if he was a participant. Bose and Dam were thus singled out.

When asked by Mr. James if Subhas was guilty

unlike others who all pleaded innocence, he said :
 “I wont tell if I am guilty or not guilty.”

Mr. James—Do you know as a member of the Consultative Committee—you are bound to help me.

Subhas—Yes.

M. James—Then help me.

Subhas—Sorry.

The Governing body was consulted, and Mr. James soon after accosting Subhas thus addressed him—

—“You are the most disturbing element in the college. I order your expulsion.”

*Calmly did Subhas leave the place.

Now the after-events also are no less interesting, connected as they were with the students. Mr. Lyon immediately ordered a Committee of Enquiry consisting of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, Mr. Hornel, Director of Public Instruction, Mr. G. Mitchel, Principal, Wesleyan College, Bankura, Mr. H. R. James, and Mr. Heramba Moitra, Principal, City College.

The terms of reference were—they shall consider the question of discipline in the Presidency College with special reference to the strike of the students which took place in Jan. and the recent assault on Mr. Oaten in February.

* Resolution ran—“Resolved that Subhas Ch. Bose be expelled from the College for taking a leading part in the assault on Mr. Oaten.”

The "Statesman" was furious over the appointment of the Committee "which" it says, "looks like a triumph for the youthful forces of disorder and a rebuff for the college authority and doubtless the Bengali Press will wax enthusiastic over the prowess of the young hopefuls". Mr. James addressed a letter of protest to the Government against the appointment of Sir Ashutosh and Mr. Hornel and withdrew from the Committee. Mr. Peake, a Professor, Presidency College was appointed in his place.

Mr. James next saw Mr. Lyon and exchanged hard words with him. He was thus suspended from the post of the Principal as in the opinion of the Government he showed himself unfit for retaining the post of the Principal. Mr. W. C. Wordsworth, Inspector of Schools, was appointed Principal in his place.

Before the Committee of Enquiry, Subhas and Ananga were the first and second witness and Mr. Bholanath Roy, Secretary of the Students' Consultative Committee, the third. The Committee of Enquiry said nothing as to who had assaulted nor found the complaint of Kamala Bose a false one. There was difference in his statement with that of Mr. Oaten who said 'he simply took the boy by the hand and did not call 'rascal'. The Committee however stressed on the first statement of Kamala which in its opinion remained unvaried all through. The Committee however

vindicated the position of Mr. James. It praised the excellent judgment of the Principal who managed “an impulsive and indiscreet professor and the silly boys whose morbid temperament led them to see an insult in any chance word or act.”

But Mr. James did not stay on. The degradation from his position of the principal cut him to the quick and he left for ‘home’.

Thus was the episode closed and the press (both English and Bengali), took particular sides. But the author does not like to recount their continuous and conflicting observations. All he can say like Prof. W. W. Pearson is that “spirit of youth was right in refusing to be crushed and that wise and magnanimous treatment was really lacking.”

The student-question was then an all-absorbing question of the time, and we could not better satisfy our readers, Indian and foreign, than quoting the pertinent and timely observations of our International poet and thinker Rabindra Nath, a few lines of whose article—‘Indian students and Western teachers’—(Modern Review, April, 1916 p. 416) are quoted below:—

“When students can combine to insult their professors, it is not only an offence against propriety, but also against nature.

* * * * *

"I cannot hold it to be true that the mental attitude of the Bengali student is a kind of special creation, in the region of Psychology.

* * * * *

"Students at the college are always in a stage of transition. For the first time in their lives they have come out of school discipline into freedom. And this new freedom is not merely out-word. They have gained their right to judge for themselves.

"This transition period of life is full of sensitiveness. The least insult pierces to the quick. On the other hand the simplest suggestion—love, makes the heart glad. This is the time, therefore, when the influence of human contact is most powerful, because this is the time when man is moulded by man. The truth of this has been acknowledged everywhere. Therefore we have in our scriptures the verse :

'When the son has attained his sixteenth year, his father must treat him as a friend.'

"Those teachers whom nature has marked out for gaolers, drill-sergeants and exorcists should never be given the special care of students. Only those are fit for such work who have a natural feeling of respect even for the young in age and in wisdom, who understand the sanskrit verse—

'Forgiveness is the adornment of the powerful : and who have no hesitation in accepting their students as their friends.'

"India for Europeans is a land of exile. Here the European professor does not look upon his vocation simply as that of a teacher. He feels himself also to be a king of

the country. He is a European and a Professor of an Imperial service to boot—a fragment of royalty. Often also he suffers from the conviction that he has come out to do us good. In such circumstances, he may not always feel the necessity of controlling his tongue or his temper.

“Therefore, our students will never be satisfied with mere scripts of lecture-notes and logic and grammar. They will stand out for their own life of self-respect. They will never take themselves to be mere puppets or allow themselves to be unjustly coerced into submission. This attitude of mind has become a fact today. It is possible to treat it as a delusion, it is possible to abuse but it is impossible to ignore it. By striking a blow at it, you only give it an opportunity of proving itself all the more true. **If the discussion about the Presidency College were merely some local affair and nothing more, I should not take the trouble to write about it; but there is large question intimately connected with it and I should be wanting in my duty to my country and to the Government if I remain silent.**

“We want Englishmen—but if we allow Englishmen to go on despising and treating us with contempt then we shall never win their hearts. We must claim respect from them. And at such a time as this, we shall not turn the other cheek when struck by the Principal of a Mission College.

* * * * *

“The two English Professors who have come to me at my Asram not for preaching their own religion nor for raising the fallen, have no presumptuous thought that they have their

birth in this world—to civilise the barbarian' but like their master have spread their arms to the children though they are Bengali children.

"The real reason why the relation between European professors and Indian students has become so difficult was revealed to me one day in England when I was travelling in a Railway carriage. My fellow-traveller an Englishman was at first favourably attracted by my appearance so much so he thought and took the thought with equanimity that I had come to England to preach some better religion. Suddenly he felt the curiosity to ask me from what part of India I had come. And when he was informed by me that I came from Bengal, it seemed to give him a great shock. Then his vocabulary showed an amazing richness in its terms of vilification of the whole Bengali people.

"...To my fellow-passenger I lost my personality directly he heard that I was a Bengali. After that information I became mere an objectionable quality and for me there was no longer any need of ordinary politeness."

"Because the Bengalees have become mere adjective to the Englishmen signifying dislike, it has become difficult for the latter to feel our reality.....

"But can this darkness be removed by raising dust with more and more punishment ?

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"...Young Bengal of today might have carried reverence and love for Englishmen into the world from the Universities where they had come in touch with their English Professors. This would have surely happened if as '*gurus*'

these teachers had been able to win their hearts when their hearts were fully susceptible to love."

As Rabindra Nath has said from experience and wisdom, had Mr. James not changed his former mentality about Bengalees and if Mr. Oaten did not labour under his superiority-complex, Subhas Bose would not have turned into having no affection for the British in general and harboured throughout his life an anti-British feeling. Be that as it may, Subhas's conviction that the moment of expulsion was the most eventful point in his life, gets here the solution. The thought that he suffered for raising protests against injustice and oppression has always given him the satisfaction he expressed and this has been the stepping stone to future courses of life that were in store for him.

As a matter of fact in the whole affair Prof. Oaten was the aggressor and students as self-respecting youngmen refused to be insulted or coerced. When Mr. Oaten went down stairs of his own accord, he met a batch of students of 10 to 15 and out of 600 students, Subhas was with the batch. Although assault was not by him, he took calmly the sentence on him. Thus was the event, the most memorable one of his life, not in beating the professor but in the suffering. Blessed are those that suffer.]



Our great poet **RABINDRANATH**,
As for his letter in connection
with the Presidency College
affair. Vide Page 28



Mr. H. R. JAMES,
Principal, Presidency College.

SECOND CHAPTER

As Commander of Volunteers

After Subhas's expulsion, he used to come out rarely from his house, but that did not deter him from helping his friends by coaching them in philosophy or collecting rice for needy families of middle class *Bhadralogs*. The spare moments he used to devote to private study more on philosophical subjects.

After a year, he was introduced to Rev. Urquhart, Principal, Scottish Churches' College who became impressed with him for his scholarship and manners. Through the goodness of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee who was reappointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, he was permitted to recommence his studies in the third year class of the Scottish Churches' College from July, 1917. Two years' loss of studies was considered by Sir Ashutosh as adequate punishment and Subhas began to read with interest. In 1919 he appeared at the B. A. Examination with Honours in Philosophy, and got First Class, standing second in order of merit with Mr. S. N. Bose (afterwards I. C. S.) standing first. Mr. Bholanath Roy, Ex-Secretary, Students' Consultative Committee, P. College who had already passed the M.A. Examination suggested some questions to Subhas, a few of which—

'Religion and Morality' being one—were actually found set. Subhas failed not in expressing thanks to Mr. Roy in a letter in April, 1919.

At the desire of his father and brothers, Subhas left for England to prepare himself for the I. C. S. Examination. He had a great hankering to get Tripos in Philosophy in the Cambridge University and sailed in the steamer on September 11, 1919.

Before leaving, Subhas came to the Scottish Churches' College to bid good bye to the Principal and Professors. Amongst others he met Mr. Roy who had been appointed a professor here in May, 1919 and thus expressed—"I am so fortunate to meet you again before I leave".

Mr. Roy, too, was very much exultant to see his old friend in coat and pantaloons, with moustache and beard shaved, and ready to start on his new adventure.

Except that he passed the I. C. S. and got Tripos in Philosophy, there is not much to note about Subhas in England. He had a happy impression of his professors at Cambridge.

In London, Subhas and Mr. Dilip Roy who had also competed in the same year with Subhas in the Matriculation Examination, used to stay at one place and Mr. Nirode Ranjan Das Gupta, President,

Improvement Trust Tribunal and Prof. Somenath Moitra in another. Mr. Das Gupta had been one year's senior to Subhas in the Presidency College, and used to speak highly of Subhas, how he used to remain always aloof from Britishers, specially the women-folk there. Not only he fought shy of them but had particular dislike of the whole lot. This dislike was turned into aversion at an incident that happened on one occasion before their eyes. Some time there Mr. Roy & Subhas were invited in the house where Messrs. Das Gupta & Moitra used to stay and Dilip Babu was requested to sing a song. No sooner he commenced than two or three English girls began to shout in mimicry. This offended Subhas so much that he expressed in disgust as to how Dilip committed a great mistake in singing before people who have no love for us and with whom any kind of co-operation is an impossibility. Such was his attitude towards the English people Subhas entertained even in their very country. But about women in general his aloofness was a special feature of his life and character. As Girish Chandra Ghose used to speak about Sree Vivekananda, Subhas, too, was like *butter skimmed before sun-rise*.

Subhas however entertained great respects for Indian ladies and listened to with pride and interest Mrs. Sorojini Naidu's lectures on Indian women.

Although aloof, he had full regards for the women-folk throughout.

As he passed the Civil Service Examination and stood fourth and also got Tripos, India was in a state of great awakening as I said before. Non-Cooperation movement inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi was making rapid strides and Bengal offered its worthiest son who gave up everything, became a *Fakir* and led the movement as the coming President of the Indian National Congress, the previous one having fallen for short of expectation of the time.

Subhas heard the bugle-call of Deshbandhu, paused and concluded that he too would join the great movement. With high hopes he alighted on the shores of Bombay and met Mahatmaji who happened to be there. As was natural, Mahatmaji referred him to Deshbandhu, to whom Subhas had already addressed some letters from England. No sooner had Subhas reached Howrah than he went straight to the house of Deshbandhu Das and took the dust of his feet. In a moment the great leader felt that the young enthusiast was just the man he needed so badly to assist him in his great mission and work. Subhas came to Calcutta towards the middle of July, 1921.

Within a week, the Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee with Desh-

bandhu Das as the President, Mr. Birendra Nath Sasmal as the Secretary, Mr. Nirmal Chandra Chanda as Treasurer, met to select and form the different Boards, for the year's work in the following way :—

Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra—National Service, Mr. Satkoripoti Roy—Swadeshi, Mr. Madan Mohon Burman—Propaganda, Dr. Hemendra Nath Das Gupta (present writer)—Repression Advisory Board, Mr. Kiran, Sanker Roy—Education Board, Miss Suniti Chatterjee—Women's Organisation Board, and Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose—Publicity Board.

Some protest was raised in the meeting as to how could the important and responsible Board be placed in charge of an unknown youth, simply because he gave up service ? But thus did Deshbandhu reply :—

“Don't worry. I can see through persons. He will never belie my expectation, and he will be the right man who would do justice to the place.”

Indeed Deshbandhu's expectation was fully justified by the after events.

Subhas was then not yet a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Only a few days ago, he came to the writer's house at 6/1, Mohim Halder Street, where the South Calcutta District Congress Committee was located with the writer in full charge and Deshbandhu Das as the

President, and enrolled himself as a primary member after signing the pledge and on payment of as 4. I remember the occasion and the talks he had with me for about a couple of hours. I can not resist the temptation of giving the first impression of the young hero.

His looks were thoughtful and ordinarily he used to speak little. But in conversation he was very warm and the genial smile in his face used to give an impress of his mind. He was full of determination and he was not at all conceited. In the course of a talk he said :

“In our country our leaders before have been of this mind that if India be made free through their efforts well and good, but if it is done by others, better that India should not be free”. We both laughed.

How beautiful was his writing ! And he put 25 in figures as his age. I accompanied him upto the place where Tram cars stop and saw him off. Ever since that day I have always seen him interested in South Calcutta Congress works.

Besides his duties as Secretary, Publicity Board, he was also made the Principal of the National College which, along with the B. P. C. C. office, was also located at the Forbes Mansion at 11, Wellington Square. The number of students was large and he used to take a keen interest. There was on one occasion a

social function at the college when the renowned novelist Babu Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was also a speaker. I heard Subhas addressing the meeting in the following words, which still ring in my ears—

“To make our Non-Co-operation with the Britishers successful, we must have fullest co-operation amongst ourselves.”

In September next, Mahatmaji came to Calcutta and stayed at Deshbandhu's house at 148, Russa Road South, with Moulana Mohammed Ali, Begum Mohammed Ali, Moulana Azad Sobhani and a few others. On that occasion he gave instructions to the prominent workers for three days and invited questions. Scarcely did Subhas put a question. He was the silent listener and the task of noting down what came from Mahatmaji in answer to the questions, fell upon Subhas.

That was the time when the Congress under the lead of Mahtmaji wanted to complete the programme of the boycott of foreign cloth within the month of September, 1921. In all meetings held at Calcutta with Mahatmaji on the chair and Deshbandhu Das appealing for boycott, we saw incessant showers of clothes coming and afterwards Mahatmaji setting fire to the bundles. The same enthusiasm was perceived wherever this scene repeated itself. After about

two weeks Mahatmaji left Calcutta and Moulana Mohamed Ali was arrested at Waltair.

Then towards the end of September, 1921, Subhas came to the South Calcutta Congress office and wished me to organise picketting in shops of South Calcutta to make the boycott successful. The next morning Subhas, myself and only four more workers marched through the Russa Road from Purna Theatre (Then Russa Theatre) to Jogoo Babu's bazar and this marked the beginning of *Subhas's march*. Picketting was started and so successful and well-managed it proved that within a fortnight two to three hundred volunteers were found willing to work most wholeheartedly and by their disciplined conduct they made the excellent picketting 'one of the seven wonders' as the people of Bhowanipur used to say. One of the volunteers was one day roughly handled by the manager of a well-known shop and the result was the complete and voluntary boycott of the shop which was lifted only after the owner thoroughly apologised for the rudeness of his manager. The whole South Calcutta was re-organised once again (once it had been so done to raise Tilak Swaraj Fund) and Subhas used to lead the march through the streets of South Calcutta, sometimes reaching the B.P.C.C. Office at Wellington Square and sometimes to Burrabazar striking terror to the hearts of shop-keepers.



**Swami Vivekananda who gave Subhas
inspiration in Sevadharma from his boyhood**



Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee who withdrew
the order of expulsion on Subhas.

All the while Subhas Chandra was not silent about his responsibilities as the Secretary, Publicity Department. He gave such crushing replies to the adverse comments to the works of the Congress that there was no repetition of similar criticisms. In his convincing and marvellous statements as Publicity Officer, even the Simla Viceregal Office would admit defeat as the "Statesman" rightly remarked. It also further remarked that in as much the Congress has secured such an able man, the Government has in proportion lost a competent officer.

The whole country received another impetus, when the resolution which moved by Moulana Mohammed Ali under the auspices of the All India Khilafat Conference at Karachi had been the subject matter of prosecution of the Ali Brothers, Dr. Kichlew and others, was read and adopted by all important meetings throughout the country. Next came the memorable day of *November 17, 1921* when His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward the VIII since abdicated) arrived at Bombay. In pursuance of the Resolution of the All India Congress Committee, *Hartal* was observed throughout India on the day of the Prince's arrival. But somehow or other, violence broke out in Bombay, while Calcutta under Deshbandhu observed its most peaceful and spontaneous

Hartal. All the shops were automatically closed and no conveyance of any kind was possible that day. Schools were closed, Courts had no work and even the *Khansamas* did not attend to their work.

Deshbandhu from his house was directing and watching every thing and workers had no rest. All day Subhas attended to the arrival of trains at Howrah and Sealdah and helped in carrying children and women to their destinations in the only cars which bore placards 'On National Service'. As Publicity Officer, his work was the most responsible that day especially as the Secretary of the B.P.C.C. was then outside Calcutta. Calcutta Hartal of the 17th Nov., was indeed a unique affair.

But the success in the peaceful organisation and fruition of the congress-item on that occasion was attended with Bureaucratic repression and my work as the Secretary of that Board was also considerably increased. But every thing was however done in consultation with Subhas, and with direction from Deshbandhu.

Next day, Nov. 18, with big head-lines appeared worst criticism about it in the Anglo Indian papers and the whole day was probably taken up in the consultation amongst the high officials as we heard, in response to the representations by Bengal Chamber

of Commerce for future protection, by suppressing activities of the Congress which was responsible for such great inconvenience caused to the Europeans and Anglo Indians. On the 19th November, 1921 came out again in broad head-lines the following in the "Statesman" :—

(1) All volunteer organisations of the Congress and Khilafat in Calcutta and suburbs are held illegal.

(2) All public meetings are prohibited under the Seditious Meetings' Act.

Similar measures also followed in other provinces. A few hours before, the Congress and the Khilafat offices were raided by police and some papers taken away. For other districts also similar steps were taken.

Deshbandhu was starting that day for Surat to attend the meeting of the Working Committee. He expressed that he would consult Mahatmaji how we could protest against the illegal enactments of the Government and in the meantime asked all his followers to desist from doing any thing as to hold a meeting or offer arrest. Deshbandhu apprehended the immediate arrest of the Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, Secretary, Provincial Khilafat Committee and of Subhas as Secretary, Publicity

Department. He however advised to procure a list with signatures as to who would work as volunteers for country's cause and lists of such workers, in which all leaders too joined, were immediately prepared.

Some gentlemen, however, whom we spoke about before, as always criticising Deshbandhu's activities, held immediately a meeting that very day in the afternoon at the *Servant Office* at Huzari Mull Lane where they were urging immediate protest by calling meetings. Both Messrs. Sasmal and Subhas disapproved of the idea and asked all to wait till Deshbandhu's return. They were no doubt whittled, but we did not hear of any meeting afterwards. However, the venue of the Working Committee was changed from Surat to Bombay and Deshbandhu got the resolution passed at Bombay, permitting Provincial Congress Committees to launch individual Civil Disobedience, if thought necessary.

As soon as Deshbandhu Das came back to Calcutta, he immediately called a meeting of the B.P.C.C. and got it to sanction Civil Disobedience as protest to the unlawful measures of the Government and to authorise him to lead the movement as Dictator. It was arranged by Deshbandhu that five volunteers would go in a batch and a Congress-spy would watch them from distance. Their duty would be to sell

Khaddar and declare Hartal for the 24th December, 1921, when the Prince of Wales would visit Calcutta.

It was settled that the six volunteers would be selected, two from the Bengali Community, two from the Marwari Community and two from the Mohomedan Community. Mr. Wahed Hossain, Mr. Padamraj Jain and the writer of this book would be three heads of the three different groups and Subhas would be at the top—the General Officer Commanding. South Calcutta Congress Committee of which I spoke before was supplying the Bengali volunteers to start with. Some time, of course, was taken for preparation.

Civil disobedience started from Dec. 1 but there was little enthusiasm on the first few days, as none was arrested, not even questioned by any one. In the morning when we all used to meet at Deshbandhu's house and take his counsel, Subhas used to grumble at the unconcern of the police in not arresting any man. Deshbandhu however felt certain that hundreds, if not thousands would be soon arrested. I remember how a witty expression of Deshbandhu made even the serious face of Subhas smile. Each day Deshbandhu used to ask the same question—"Well Subhas, how many are arrested?" "None yet, Sir," was the the reply. "Don't worry, the time is just coming", Deshbandhu used to hearten. On the 5th morning Deshbandhu had already been seated in his

place with others by him. Finding Subhas approaching him with a dejected face, thus did Deshbandhu observe :—"Here comes our crying Captain !".

On the 6th December, however, a batch was arrested for the first time. On the 7th, started on journey Chira Ranjan, the valiant son of Deshbandhu with his own band, chosen from South Calcutta. On the 8th went Sja. Basanti Devi, the worthy consort of Deshbandhu, Urmila Devi, his sister, and Suniti Devi, Secry., W. O. Board, with Sja. Hemanta Sarkar as the Congress-envoy. As soon as they were explaining their mission, one of the sergeants stepped in and addressed the ladies thus :—

"Madam, what are you doing ?"

Basanti Devi—"Well, we are selling Khaddar and asking people to observe Hartal on the 24th. December.

Sergeant—"Would you mind coming to the thana"?

Basanti Devi—"Yes, by all means".

At the Thana they were told that they were under arrest. Hemanta Babu was also arrested.

No sooner did the news of the arrest spread like wild fire in all quarters, hundreds of men—young, aged and old, came to the thana and offered arrest. That was a scene I saw on that occasion and shall never forget. It was unheard of before, within the living memory.

The first word from Deshbandhu when he heard of the news of the ladies' arrest, was :—

“I shall strike the government to its very foundation”.

Some time after I went to Deshbandhu's house. Asking me and Sj. Satyendra Ch. Mitra to go to the thana, he went to the Forbes Mansion with his serene look as before.

The work of Subhas was now considerably increased by hundred-fold. Volunteers poured in, and of all others Subhas had no rest. On the 10th in the midst of all commotion and excitement was seen Mr. Kyd, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Southern Division, with Asst. Commissioners, Sergeants, Police Inspectors and constables. They came to arrest Deshbandhu and Sasmal from that place. Enquiry was made about Subhas also. In the midst of sighs and shouts of *Ulu*, Deshbandhu started with his Secretary Sasmal for the *Swaraj Asram* and the whole city was in grief but on the tip-toe of enthusiasm.

About seven o'clock in the evening, after the whole day's work was finished, Subhas phoned to the Commissioner of Police, Lalbazar, thus :—

“I am told, you enquired of me. Do you mean to arrest me ? I am now ready”.

A police force came and took him to the Presidency Jail where Deshbandhu, Sasmal, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Moulana Akram Khan, Moulvi

Mujibar Rahaman and others had already been clapped. Subhas's cell was by Deshbandhu's.

There is nothing of importance to mention about the Presidency Jail except that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as the intermediary between His Excellency The Viceroy of India and Deshbandhu came there about the peace-proposals which ran to the effect that Hartal of 24th is to be given up, all persons arrested and sentenced for alleged disobedience to the law of Volunteer Organisation and Seditious meetings are to be released and a Round Table Conference is to be convened to consider further reforms. Deshbandhu agreed to the terms for the time being and wanted consent of Mahatmaji through wire that was arranged by the government. But Mahatma insisted on the release of Ali Brothers and wanted to know about the Personnel of the Conference. A second telegram was despatched, but the reply came late and the negotiations fell through. This led Deshbandhu to chalk about his new programme of council-entry consistent with the principle of Non-Co-operation, of which we shall speak later on.

Although arrested on the 10th December, trial of Subhas before Mr. Swinhoe, the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta, was not finished till the 7th February, 1922 and Deshbandhu's on the 11th. On

that day Messrs. J. M. Sen Gupta, Nishit Sen, Suren Halder had all been present before Subhas was brought on the dock. The cases of Deshbandhu Das and Mr. Sasmal were also fixed for hearing on that day. As soon as Subhas was brought, Mr. Swinhoe addressed him :—
 “You are sentenced to six months’ simple imprisonment for having organised volunteers under Sec. 17 (2) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.”

Subhas—“Only six months ?”

Magistrate—“Yes.” (To a Sergeant) “Remove him from the dock.” While going Subhas was heard grumbling—“It is a matter of great shame that I have been given only six months !”

Subhas was then taken to the Central Jail where we had been already in hundreds. Deshbandhu and Sasmal came there within a week. It is a long tale to give every detail of the jail as I was there all along with Deshbandhu, Subhas, Sasmal and others. But Subhas’s main duty was to serve Deshbandhu. He used to look after all comforts of Deshbandhu and lived with him as his ‘cook’. On one occasion Sir Abdur Rahim, Member of the Executive Council, came to visit the Central Jail and had a hearty talk with Deshbandhu, who was a fellow member of the same profession. To Sir Abdur Rahim who said—“Das, you are a very costly prisoner, an

I. C. S. member is your cook and a university professor your servant", Deshbandhu's immediate retort was "Because you have brought a costly prisoner." Mr. Hemanta Kumar Sarker had also been there as another attendant of Deshbandhu.

Our leader's main work at the Jail was his assiduous labour in writing the history of Indian Nationalism in English from the time of the Mahabharata upto the present time. It was one of the most valuable contributions ever conceived of and those who listened to the passages, as we did, were overjoyed at the lore of knowledge Deshbandhu possessed. The book however, during the multifarious works of Deshbandhu when out of jail, could not be finished and did not see the light of the day. Besides this, Deshbandhu used to speak and discuss about the new programme of council-entry which Subhas took to heart as the only fighting programme Congress could under the circumstances give us. We shall discuss about these further in the next chapter.

At the jail what impressed every body—to both a Hindu or a Mohammedan, was the equality of treatment accorded to by Deshbandhu. He was a friend to all and no less a friend to Islam. At the jail, one had the opportunity of judging the individual Mohammedans and

found that in culture or scholarship, in magnanimity or manners every one individually is an ornament and neither community has any justification to treat the other with any feeling of inferiority. I remember an instance when the Hindus and the Mohammedans took part in a Mohammedan festival with the same joy and sincerity of feelings. In 1922, in the month of May after one month's fasting (Roza) came the Id ceremony when a number of goats and rams were ordered from outside and the Hindus were also invited by the Moslem brothers to partake of the dishes prepared at the latter's cost in their respective and separate kitchens. But Deshbandhu said, 'No, the festivity should be shared in by all of us together and cooking too should be done together.'

At about 9 P. M., we all sat in the feast—Deshbandhu in the middle with Sasmal, Samsunder, Akram, Mujibar and the others by or in front of him. While partaking of the dishes Deshbandhu uttered, "This is because of this movement." Similar was the treatment accorded to members of depressed classes and to old offenders, one of whom Mathur with seven or eight previous convictions as an inveterate thief came to serve him. Deshbandhu loved him dearly and tried to reform him. The treatment to the Mohammedan brothers and to the people of Mathur's sort impressed Subhas greatly and appears to me to

be the means and germ how he could so much win the hearts of his followers of the *Azad Hind Fouz* comprising both Hindus and Mohammedan brothers, to whom their different religious faiths affected not in the least in their living and working together and with whom Nationalism was their only religion. Hindus and Mohammedans living side by side, dining and sitting together is a sight for the gods and that was possible with the Azad Hind Fouz in later period.

Subhas used to mix with all in the jail but no one had ever any occasion to think that he felt too much of himself although as I said before, his face often assumed a serious look.

On the 4th August, 1922 his term was completed and he came out of jail with all advice, directions and instructions, five days before Deshbandhu was released.

On Sept. 5, Babu Motilal Ghose, the reputed editor of the Amritabazar Patrika, passed away and Subhas was seen to offer his last obeisance at Bagbazar. Our readers should be reminded how during the Students' strike of the Presidency College of 1916, Moti Babu used to give students good advice and how Subhas entertained him with songs occasionally.

The next activity of Subhas was the leading part he took in the "All Bengal Youngmen's Conference" which had its sittings from the 16th to 18th September,

1922 at the Arya-Samaj Hall when Dr. Meghnad Shaha was the President and Subhas was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Delegates were chosen from schools, colleges, Maktabas, Libraries and Associations and in his speech, Subhas pleaded for sincere work and patient suffering. He stressed on all important topics—spread of mass education, Swadeshi, unity amongst different communities, removal of untouchability, prevention of early marriages, abolition of dowry, social service, discipline, upholding truth and justice everywhere, and his speech “in thought and language, in style and delivery was”, as the Amritabazar Patrika rightly remarked, “worthy of the man from whom it came.”

The next was his activity during the North Bengal flood which brought devastation to several districts of that side. On the 28th September, 1922 a telegram was received that several places of Bogra, Rajshahi, Pabna, Dinajpur and Rangpur were under water about 12 ft. high, and houses were damaged, men and cattle were floating in water and crops had been destroyed. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at once sent Subhas and Dr. J. M. Das Gupta to the locality. On reaching the place Subhas toured round from October 3, Adamdighi, Madanpur, Talsum, Kusumbi, Bogra and other places and made Santahar as his centre. A number of tents were

pitched and offices of enquiry, provision, despatch etc. began to function, In the meantime Bengal Relief Committee with Sir P. C. Roy as President was formed with its office at 92, Upper Circular Road and Sir Profulla entrusted Subhas fully with the responsible work, sending money, rice, clothes etc. for relief, for the facility of the workers. Subhas, besides getting local workers, wrote to his old friends to come and assist him. The Congress workers of the province met him and rendered all assistance. It was at that time, released from jail, I was just spending some days' leisure at home with friends and relations. But the news, that I was wanted there, forced me immediately to go to Santahar and stand by Subhas, especially when Deshbandhu was not in Calcutta but was trying to recoup his health in some healthy resort at Murree in the Punjab. I found Subhas working with a band of about 1,000 workers throughout North Bengal as the General Officer Commanding there. There I used to work as his first assistant in the office. Six weeks or a little more he was there doing that humanitarian work till Deshbandhu arrived at Calcutta and required all possible assistance and hearty co-operation of his principal workers in the great work then before him. Within a few days Subhas left Santahar, leaving the charge to Dr. Indra N. Sen Gupta who had worked under him at Atrai-centre at Natore.

I shall here mention a very interesting reminiscence his father narrated to many, including my friend Babu Kumudbandhu Sen (a disciple of Swami Brahmananda), who had been previously known to Janaki Babu at Cuttack.

The Durgapuja was approaching when Subhas came to his father and took dust of his feet before leaving for Santahar. His father accosted—

“What ! you are going, when Mother Durga will be worshipped at my house at Kodalia !—How shall I feel to go without you ?”

“No father, no, you all go to worship Durga at home and I go to worship my real mother Durga with the helpless.”

Janaki Babu after performing Puja went to Kurseong and halted on the way at Santahar to be astonished beyond measure at the excellent arrangements and organisation under Subhas there.

At a later period Janaki Babu expressed to many, “I am so proud that I am the father of Subhas.”

Deshbandhu was then very much up and doing with his programme of Council-entry. It was his nature that when he wanted to do a thing, he used to devote his heart and soul for the success of it. When he had started Civil Disobedience in 1921, he gave

all his best workers, his son, his wife and last himself too. The success was immeasurable and of the twenty thousand valiant soldiers who courted jail in 1921 throughout India, Bengal's contribution came upto 16000. But the situation that was created in Indian political firmament could not be taken advantage of at that time. His principle was—fight we must, but we should give our countrymen some benefits and those can be derived only by bringing the Bureaucratic power to its knees, and thus forcing it to come to terms.

That situation can not soon come, and Civil Disobedience also requires to be resorted to only on certain occasions. Besides the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee considered in its report that the present was not the time when the country could be said to be fit for launching Civil Disobedience. What then should be done to awaken the people again? The work of the Congress was at a standstill, enthusiasm of workers abated and Councils' work went on as usual inspite of the boycott of the same by the Congress. Repression too was proceeding unchallenged with laws passed with consent of members as elected.

Under such circumstances when no sign of any activity was perceived in the country, Deshbandhu laid down the programme,—“that we should goto the Councils and oppose all Bureaucratic measures and make the

Diarchical Government impossible, that the budget is to be rejected and the Government after all its defeats will be driven to rule by certification only." He held "that the Reforms by the Govt. of India Act of 1919 are only masks and we want to tear those masks off the faces of the Bureaucracy, that there will remain only two parties—the Government and the other the people,—the middle one the moderates with whose help Govt. machinery is now being carried, will have to disappear, that rule by certification will enkindle people's self-respect and their enthusiasm will be great and with that help, Civil Disobedience will soon come within the range of practical politics."

The above programme involves the fighting attitude on the part of the people and Subhas accepted this as the only possible fighting programme of the time. But for months Deshbandhu had to work against odds. From Nov. 1922 to the Delhi special session of the Congress of 1923 (Sept.), not less than ten thousand meetings were held throughout the country. I attended many of such meetings and heard Deshbandhu speak. But I shall here mention about a meeting held at the College Square on Dec. 11, in which Subhas occupied the chair and Smta. Hemprova Mazumder, Satkowripati Roy, J. M. Sen Gupta, Kiran Sankar Roy and present writer spoke. The other party of "No changers" was represented by Dr.

Profulla Ghosh who also spoke in that meeting. I noted down the following statement of Subhas, coming from his presidential chair :—

“If we could create a political crisis, the problem of the attainment of Swaraj would be solved. Such crisis was possible in December last and unless such crisis is created, there is no hope. The question is whether the crisis would be possible through *Satyagraha* or Council. We do not however find any possibility of launching the campaign of *Satyagraha* within the next twelve or fourteen months. But it is possible to get through Councils if we are assured of an absolute majority.

“Deshbandhu is firm in believing that we shall be able to secure a majority. I have got absolute faith and confidence in his words, *In his political reasonings and conclusions he never commits an error.* We are sure to get the desired majority.”

“Where were the oppositionists of the programme in December 1921 when thousands went to jail? To sit silent then and to come out now to oppose the real fighters should hardly be called *Sadhu Acharan* (noble conduct).”

Deshbandhu was elected President of the next session of the Congress at Gaya (1922). Before this the Working Committee as well as the All India

Congress Committee had met at his house in Calcutta and the question of entry or otherwise to the Councils was referred to the main session at Gaya.

Deshbandhu started with his party on Dec. 20, 1922 and Subhas accompanied him to act as Secretary to the *President of the Congress*. Deshbandhu's presidential speech was one of the most marvellous ever delivered by a president. It was as practical, as full of truths. Not only a finished lawyer and one whose burning patriotism was unparalleled were clearly seen in the speech, it had also the great vision which became the beakon light to the practical politicians of later days. Two things impressed Subhas a great deal. One, his delineation of the world position with regard to Non-Violence which he held on principle and discussion on questions of expediency also and secondly his exposition of the idea of Asiatic Federation and the participation of India in it. **With him there must be a bond of friendship, love, sympathy and co-operation between India and the rest of Asia and Pan-Islamic movement which was started on a narrow basis has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic people which is nothing but or in other words the union of the oppressed Nationalists of Asia.**" But what impressed him more was the decorum in the chair. In the open session Deshbandhu and Pandit Matilal Nehru (both

as of one mind and views) were defeated and Deshbandhu took the defeat in the most sportsman-like spirit. But before the session came to the end, he did not fail to impress on the audience the unwisdom of the course in the following words :

“To-day you have not heard me, but ere-long you are bound to hear me. I predict that I shall bring round the whole Congress to my views within a year.”

Deshbandhu, seer as he was, could fulfil his promise.

At the conclusion of the session, he resigned his position as President of the Congress and on the next morning (1st Jan., 1923) formed the “All India Swarajya Party” with himself as President and Pandit Matilal Nehru as the General Secretary.

At first his extreme followers were with him, but the whole country became converts within a short period.

The members of the All India Congress Committee too, took the most reasonable view. Although non-cooperators with full faith in boycott of councils at the time, Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Purushottamdas Tandon at its meeting at Bombay sponsored a resolution which disfavoured propaganda against council-entry. This facilitated the path of the Swarajist and within less than a year a special session of the Congress was held at Delhi under the wise presidency

of Moulana Abul Kamal Azad (the present Rastrapati). The compromise resolution* received the unanimous assent of the delegates and the Swarajists were permitted to enter Councils and Assemblies although it adhered to its original boycott. The resolution was moved by Moulana Mohammad Ali and supported by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others.

But within these nine months much water had flowed through the Ganges and Jamuna. Although we do not like to worry our readers over the detailed history of the period, we shall however mention a few details which concern Subhas greatly. In 1923, Subhas accompanied Deshbandhu to Barisal along with other members of the party where the resolution moved by Deshbandhu which indicated masterly exposition by him of the functions of the All India Congress Committee and Provincial Committees, was declared *Ultra Vires* by Babu Shyam Sundar Chakravartty, the President of the Committee. Subhas attended all the huge assemblages at Barisal which were addressed to by Deshbandhu.

*Adhering to the principle of non-violent non-co-operation, this Congress declares that such Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objections against entering legislature are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections and this Congress therefore suspends all propaganda against entering the Council.

Subhas also accompanied Deshbandhu in his tour to East Bengal, specially at Dacca and Mymensing. During the Congress Session at Delhi Subhas was in charge of Bengali delegates who were located in the Hindu College on the northern side of the Railway at Delhi. I found him at the Delhi station receiving delegates and looking after their comforts.

The other matter too interested Subhas very much. Some Provincial Congress Committees rebelled against the Bombay resolution of the A. I. C. C. The Executive Council of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee being in the hands of No-changers, was one of the three, Madras and Gujrat being the remaining two. Swarajists and non-party men did not brook this disobedience to the parent body. A requisition signed by some members was sent to the Secretary, B. P. C. C., to call a meeting to consider the vote of no-confidence on them. The latter having failed to call the meeting, requisitionists themselves called the meeting and passed a vote of no-confidence on the council and the whole body of B. P. C. C. then elected a fresh non-party President and Secretary in the person of Maulana Akram Khan and Babu Bhupati Mazumder respectively as also a fresh Executive Council. August 11, 1923 was fixed as the day of the confirmation meeting at the Indian Association, where two sets of presidents and secretaries were sitting in the same hall with different

tables in different places. Members however ratified the proceedings of the Requisition meeting and confirmed Māulana Akram Khan and Bhupati Majumder as the President and Secretary, as also the new Council.

Then arose new developments. Both the councils proceeded on with the election of delegates for the Delhi Special Session of the Congress. The matter was referred to Pandit Modan Mohan Malaviya, who decided in favour of the new Executive. An appeal by the old council of No-changers having been preferred to the A. I. C. C. the board consisting of the President of the A. I. C. C. Mr. Venkatappa, Moulana Mahammad Ali, Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan upheld the decision of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

This helped Deshbandhu very much in getting decidedly a vast body of delegates to support the council-entry.

Another thing requires to be noted also very carefully that in turning round the whole Congress to the view of Deshbandhu, it is not he that rebelled, but some of the very no-changers who won at Gaya rebelled by flouting the resolution of the A. I. C. C. at Bombay. That tactful and presistent way in which Deshbandhu throughout these months worked with Herculean strength and vigour inspite of tremendous difficulties

including pecuniary ones, further filled Subhas Chandra with the greatest reverence for his leader and engendered in him a spirit of working in the same vigorous way in his after-life.

The next phase was how Deshbandhu within the three months won almost in all the polls and got a thumping majority which stood in great stead in defeating the Government party throughout. But we need not go to the details here.

Deshbandhu had raised some money for the publication of a daily paper under the name of "Forward" with himself as the Editor-in-Chief.

But before the paper saw the light of the day and just after the Delhi Congress many leading workers of the B. P. C. C., including the Secretary Bhupati Babu, Babu Monomohan Bhattayacharyya (who was meant by Deshbandhu to be the manager of 'Forward'), Babu Upendra Nath Banerjee, who was to be the Asst. Editor, Forward, were arrested under Reg. III of 1818 and Deshbandhu immediately put Subhas in the Forward office, and under his (Subhas's) management, the first issue of "Forward" came out on October 25, 1923.

Subhas was the Manager here only for a few months and worked very hard, sometimes keeping awake whole night. But he had not to remain long.



Deshbandhu Chittaranjan
the Master ; Inspiration and Guide of Subhas

in the Forward Office (then at Dharmatolla street). as he was meant for more arduous work. I had to come in contact here too intimately with Subhas as from January 1924 to April, I had raised about Rupees Forty thousand in shares with Deshbandhu's help for the Forward Publishing House under the auspices of which the daily paper used to come out. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose was then the Managing Director.

In the new elections of the B. P. C. C. towards the end of 1923, Deshbandhu became again the President and Subhas the Secretary with Mr. Purna Das as Asstt. Secretary.

In January, 1924, occurred a very unfortunate and tragic incident of dastardly outrage. For the recent arrests and detentions a class of people began to hold Mr. Tegart (afterwards Sir Charles Tegart), Commissioner of Police, responsible. Some youngmen infused with a spirit of terrorism wanted to put an end to the life of Mr. Tegart. On January 12, at 8 A.M. one Gopinath Saha shot Mr. Earnest Day of the Kilburn & Co., dead at the Chowringhee Road near Hall & Anderson, thinking him to be Mr. Tegart. The youngman while running away was apprehended and put up on his trial before the Hon'ble High Court.

His plea of insanity did not hold good and he was sentenced to death. On the day he was executed on

March 1, 1924, Gopinath was found to have increased in weight by 5 lbs since the day of sentence. He walked to the gallows similingly taking names of Gods & Goddesses and had a sound sleep on the previous night. On the day of sentence he is said to have uttered "*May every drop of my blood, sow the deeds of freedom in every home of India*" and his apeal before to his own mother to pray to the Almighty that mothers in India should give birth to a son like him and every house should be sanctified like a mother like his, filled all men and women of Bengal with a feeling of admiration, however misguided his act was.

Gopinath was cremated in the Jail compound by his brother Madan Mohan Saha and three others. Hearing that permit would be given to enter the Jail to perform the funeral rites, Subhas and Sj. Purna Das accompanied by many college students went to the Presidency Jail early in the morning but failing to get permits could not enter, but when the last relics of Gopinath,—the clothes given by Jail authorities to his brother—were touched by Subhas, he was very much moved. This does not mean Subhas entertained sympathy for terrorism, but the spirit of sacrifice filled him with admiration and a similar resolution was passed even by the Serajganj Provincial Conference which met under Moulana Akram Khan in June, 1924. The All India Congress Committee too praised his spirit of sacrifice

although the act was condemned, but a similar resolution as passed at Serajganj, was unanimously passed at a later period by the open session of the Karachi Congress in 1931, in the very presence of Mahatma Gandhi after Bhagat Sing, Sukdeb and Rajguru had been hanged.

It is useless now to relate how a few no-changers vexed Deshbandhu very much in connection with the Gopinath Resoluion of Serajganj.

Now about the time Gopinath was executed, I found Subhas addressing a meeting at Harish Park on March 2, 1924 which would clearly give an insight into his mentality at the time. The meeting was called to educate the people as to why the entire budget would be thrown in the Bengal Legislative Council. Deshbandhu spoke at the meeting and before that Subhas also addressed in the following words :—

“Our duty is to see that pockets of Britishers are touched. There are two ways to teach them a lesson—either by force or by doing things which would touch their pockets. As the *first is unsuited to India constitution*, we must have recourse to the second.”

Now came the elections of Councillors for the Calcutta Corporation. Deshbandhu's triumphs in the Councils gave him an easy walk over for the Calcutta Corporation. In all the thirty three Wards of the city

of Calcutta, Councillors who would strictly obey the Congress mandate were returned. In one or two Wards where sympathisers with Congress views stood as candidates, Deshbandhu did not set up a rival candidate by arrangement.

Subhas was returned unopposed in the Calcutta Corporation from Ward No. 22 (Bhowanipore).

The Councils & Corporations made the position of Deshbandhu unique and Subhas as his right-hand man was also looked up by all with regards.

Then came the question as to who would be the Chief Executive Officer. At that time next in position to Deshbandhu was Mr. B. N. Sasmal, as Mr. J. M. Sengupta had already joined the Bar while the boycott of Law Courts was still in force. But Mr. Sengupta was still an important member of the Swarajya party and Deshbandhu used to praise his driving capacity very much, but his position for the time being was a bit lowered. Subhas was still young and was below the top. Sasmal towered high, as his activities in connection with the boycott of Union Boards at Midnapore made him all the more famous. For some months Sasmal had been a candidate for the post of the Chief Executive Officer and Deshbandhu had no other person in his mind at that time. But some of the leading citizens

of Calcutta did not like a *mofasalite* to control their urban affairs and opposed the idea of having Sasmal for the post. Mr. Sengupta had no hankering after the post and the next chance fell therefore upon Subhas. The Congress Municipal Association cast a larger number of votes for Subhas and Deshbandhu had to accept their decision, in party's interests. Sasmal after that practically seceded from the party, and although that was a great loss, it was however found by experience that Deshbandhu's decision with regard to Subhas was the most well-merited and judicious one under the circumstances.

On the 24th April, 1924, Subhas was selected by the whole house of the Calcutta Corporation but the appointment was not sanctioned by the Government before a month passed.

The work at the Corporation under the new Act had just begun and Subhas with his dignity, hard work and sincerity of purpose changed the atmosphere altogether and if Subhas could have been allowed to stick to the post at least for five years, the whole atmosphere would have been revolutionised in the true sense of the term.

The last official Chairman of the Corporation was an I. C. S. man Mr. Payne. He certainly maintained the dignity of his responsible post, but after all, the

Corporation under him was not strictly speaking a self-governing body. He was followed by a non-official Chairman Mr. Surendra Nath Mullick, Advocate, who too was an able and competent Chairman but partly for the legal profession he had belonged to which taught more of equality with colleagues, and partly because the Chief Engineer Mr. Coates was an Englishman who had before that often listened to Mr. Mullick's grievances as advocate for private parties, Mr. Coates and other big officers were not still used to regard fully the superiority of the position which the Bengali Chairman had held. In the office too they often treated themselves as equals. What yet Mr. Mullick kept up, the next officiating Chairman, could not maintain even the half of it. But different was the case with Subhas.

By the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 (Act III of 1923) the election privileges were much increased, thanks to the indefatigable energy and patriotic spirit of late Hon'ble Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee. By this, the post of the Chairman was abolished and the Mayor under the new Act was to preside at the general and special meetings of the Corporation and the executive work of the Chairman was to be performed by the Chief Executive Officer drawing a salary of Rs. 2500/- a month with car and house allowances and along with two of his deputies. The first

Mayor was Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and the first Chief Executive Officer was Subhas Chandra Bose.

Now by the elections held in 1924, Deshbandhu practically became the Head and arbiter of the Calcutta Corporation, with a band of Councillors having fullest regards for him as their leader. The atmosphere was thoroughly changed and the Corporation became *The Swarajya Corporation*.

But much depended on the Chief Executive Officer, and let us see how the young incumbent aged only 28 could play his part. One thing above all that caused surprise to everybody was that the official decorum was thoroughly revolutionised. On the one hand Subhas was an out and out Swarajist, on the other he had the full training of an I. C. S. By nature he was grave and his experience in the work of the Publicity Officer, in that of the General Officer Commanding in the Volunteers' organisation of 1921, and in the Flood Relief work of 1922 and the work of the first assistant under Deshbandhu from 1922, December to September, 1923, stood him in great stead. These helped him a great deal no doubt but of all Mr. Coates the Chief Engineer with equal pay and long experience was the most difficult Officer to deal with. Subhas however brought him round within a week.

Now Mr. Coates in the first few days did not

hesitate to smoke before the young Chief Executive Officer as he had done before the other two Bengali Chairmen. But one day Subhas in his usual serious manner with the smile of an I. C. S. man just reminded the Chief Engineer—

“Is it proper, Mr. Coates, to smoke before a Superior Officer?”

Mr. Coates—Sorry (and he left it in the trush).

Since then Mr. Coates did not smoke a second time unless Subhas gave him permission.

On another occasion Mr. Coates sat on the table with his legs hanging before Subhas. The latter at once reminded him how it was not proper to do that before the superior officer but the best thing would be to sit down. Since then Mr. Coates even did not sit unless asked to do so. But Subhas used invariably to ask him thus—

“Sit down, please”.

Not only Mr. Coates, the whole set of officers with him, felt the dignity and position of the Chief though held by a young man.

Subhas used to go out almost every day for inspection work. Thus the work of the outdoor staff became thoroughly regularised. The office staff also became punctual in no time.

The most arduous task was the clearing of the files. He used to read every part of it and pass orders. The order too used to be just and to the point. There was neither partiality nor injustice to any one. Files he used to read himself. He often brought those to his house also.

The Free Primary Education Department was his creation under Deshbandhu's direction and with Subhas's efforts it attained a great success in no time. The first Education Officer was Mr. Kshitish Prosad Chatterji who was a friend of Subhas even in England and assisted him in all possible ways in the education work of the Corporation. He was in the Corporation only for a short time, but both the office and outdoor work became regularised owing to his strict supervision and surprise visits. Economy was observed in all matters, and of Subhas, Deshbandhu was all admiration. If any body came to complain of any kind of management in the Corporation, the only reply Deshbandhu used to give was :—

“Wait, give us breathing time, every thing will be set right. Don't you find that for the Corporation-work and its betterment I have sacrificed the best man of my party ?”

In the Corporation, Subhas used to draw only Rs. 1500/- a month, *i.e.*, Rs. 1000/- less than the usual pay.

In the room of the Chief Executive Officer Subhas used to work hard and after day's work was finished did not scruple to receive friends who used to come to meet him. The conversation with them lasted even upto 10 and sometimes to 11 P. M.

This gave handle to some of his subordinates to find fault with him. With others again there was no smooth-sailing as they had in previous administration. So when on the 25th October, 1924, Subhas was arrested and kept under detention under Regulation III of 1818, one of the gossips that ran in the air was the conspiracy hatched by some interested persons at the bottom. This may not be true, but of one thing I can tell for certain, that upto the year 1924, Subhas had not the least concern or connection with anarchical activities of any kind whatsoever. Assuming for arguments' sake that some associations got his help for purpose or spread of matters which he thought quite healthy and peaceful, but they really used for things other than legitimate, Subhas could not be held responsible for that. I must say that the arrest of Subhas and detention for so many years was without any justification and one cannot but agree with the reasons set out by Deshbandhu—for the arrest.

Deshbandhu Das after his incessant and strenuous

work was then enjoying some rest at Simla when reached his ears the news of the arrest of Subhas, Satyendra, Anil Baran and others—about 70 in all. He hastened to come down and reached Calcutta in all haste. He then immediately called the general meeting of the Calcutta Corporation and this anguish and firm determination to effect their release were clearly demonstrated in the most wonderful speech he delivered from the Mayoral chair, a few words of which still ring in our ears :

“All I can say is that Mr. Subhas Ch. Bose is no more a revolutionary than I am. Why have they not arrested me ? I should like to know why ? If love of country is a crime, I am a criminal. If Subhas Chandra Bose is a criminal, I am a criminal—not only the Chief Executive-Officer of the Corporation, but the Mayor of the Corporation is equally guilty (cries of hear, and applause).

“I cannot believe that it is intended to put down revolutionary crime. These Ordinances are directed against lawful organisations. They want to put down lawful organisation.—I say.

“Just one word more and I have done. Subhas Bose's arrest under Regulation III of 1818 is a menace to this Corporation. Apart from any question of nationality, apart from any question of the national fight against the Government, it is a menace to this Corporation. If the Government is once allowed to touch the Chief Executive-Officer, why, the Government can go on making arrest-

after arrest, and making the administration of this Corporation impossible by Swarajists or by the majority of the members here. Take a concrete case. Suppose the Government thinks the administration, as undoubtedly some of them think, should not be left in the hands of the Congress people. Suppose from that point of view they go on arresting from the Chief Executive Officer downwards and make the administration by the members of the Congress impossible. That is the view I want you to consider and I say that from that point of view, apart from the personal question of Subhas Chandra Bose, apart from the more important political issue which arises, it is a menace to this Corporation. I ask you to express your protest in no uncertain manner condemning the Government for this action and expressing your confidence in the officer who has been taken away from you.

“Subhas Bose’s arrest under Reg. III is a sheer brute force on the part of Bureaucracy. One fine morning he went out to do his work as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. He returned home and found the Police Force in his house. Not one charge was made against him. No explanation was asked from him. Not one reason was urged before him but he was simply told ‘we have got the physical brute force here and we shall drag you to imprisonment.’ Is this not brute force? Is this law? Is this justice? Not one charge was formulated. Not one explanation was taken. But they simply carried him by force from his house and lodged him in Jail.”

Besides delivering the speech Deshbandhu immediately wired to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Matilal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Moonje, Mr. Kelkar and a few others who came in no time and examined all matters relating to Bengal. Mahatma convinced of the fact that Swarajist success at the Council and Corporation made the Bureaucracy to strike at the root of its progress by incarcerating its best workers and thus made up all differences with Deshbandhu and Panditji. Immediately a joint statement was issued in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and Pandit Matilal Nehru to the effect that *Programme of the Swarajya Party would hereafter be the main programme of the Congress.* At the next Congress session that was held in December, 1924, at Belgaon, under the presidency of Gandhiji, that declaration was made by Mahatma himself and the triple boycott of Schools, Courts and Councils was withdrawn.

Subhas was kept for about a month at the Central Jail, Alipore where he used to attend to all the files of the Corporation and give necessary orders, working in a room of the jail. Mr. Ramya, the Secretary and Deputy Executive Officer and Mr. J. C. Mukherji used to see him often. Even the Chief Engineer Mr. Coates and other Officers had to come to him. It was indeed a sight which gave even the C. I. D. officers

immense pleasure to see all the big officers standing before the young Subhas.

Deshbandhu came to see Subhas a few occasions at the jail and in the last when Deshbandhu gave him blessings two or three days before his departure for the Berhampore Jail, Subhas thus said :

“We are not probably meeting soon.”

Deshbandhu—No, that cannot be, I shall bring you back to me very shortly.

For Desbandhu that was really the last meeting with Subhas, but he moved Heaven and earth in getting Subhas and others released. Our readers may be reminded how Deshbandhu with a determination to get the Bengal Ordinance rejected in the Council on Jan., 1925, attended the Council-Chamber against medical advice in a stretcher and got the Bill really rejected leaving the only course open to the Governor to use it by certification.

Of Berhampore I do not know anything but Subhas towards January was taken to the Mandalay Jail where he stayed upto March, 1927. Srijuts Anilbaran Roy and others were then at Berhampore.

Before he left the Central Jail, Alipore, he sent news to me to see him. While there he requested me to take charge of *Dakshin Kalikata Sevasram* which

had been started in 1924 with Deshbandhu as the President and Subhas as the Secretary. Of course I gladly agreed.

The Sevasram had a history. There had existed an Orphanage at the Kalighat Road which had been helped by Deshbandhu with large sums of money from time to time, while he had been a lawyer in practice. Several complaints were heard against the organiser Mr. S and when some female inmates complained of the cruel and uncivil treatment meted to them, some workers of South Calcutta brought it to Subhas's notice. He deputed Babus Nilmoni Mukerjee, Jatin Mukerjee (both no more) and myself to enquire and report. We went to Behala where that asram had been removed and after seeing the real condition reported to Subhas. A meeting was then called by him at the Mitra Institution, Bhowanipore with Desbandhu Das in the chair and our Sevasram was opened at Jorabari, Haldarpara Road, Kalighat.

It was only six months that Sevasram had been in existence when I met him in the jail and by that time a number of orphan boys were housed, fed and given some education. Subhas arranged the Corporation to pay the major portion of expenses. I felt happy that I was asked by him to do the work and conducted it for about two years till another

lawyer-friend of mine stepped in, about whom and myself Subhas used to write jocosely as 'brothers-at-law'.

Now during the interview when Subhas was talking with me at the jail, an officer of the Special Branch came very near us to hear the talks. Subhas asked him to move, which he did not. This pin-prick, made Subhas's eyes glow, as I noticed, like those of a Caged Lion. This was the last I saw him till we met again in November, 1927.

Now, for Deshbandhu, his assistants' incarceration gave a great blow to him and his speech at the Farid-pore Conference showed how keenly he felt for them, and how anxious he was to get them released. It was termed by some as partiality to these workers of 25th October in preference to all other political prisoners, but without prejudice to others, Deshbandhu knew Subhas, Satyendra, Anil Baran very intimately ; he could therefore declare with confidence that thoroughly innocent persons have been detained only to strike at the National activities of the country. But others also he did not forget, and demanded release on general grounds as political prisoners. Indeed so much Desbandhu felt for Subhas that he considered his right hand and limbs broken—he tried for them at the cost of his life, but alas ! his days were numbered.

Subhas was at the Mandalay Jail from December, 1924 to the month of April, 1927. The rooms there were of wood and heat of Mandalay was intense. He met here his old friends Sjt. Satyendra Mitra, Purna Ch. Das, Bepin Ganguli, Satish Chakravarty, Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Trailakhya Chakrabarty, Amrita Hazra, Madan Bhounik, Amar Krishna Ghosh and others and in their company used to spend the time in healthy and useful discussions and tried to make the best out of the worst. They took part in games both indoor and outdoor which included Tennis too, talked on social, national and international matters and tried to make themselves happy under the circumstances. Subhas read Philosophical books more and had a *Thakurghar* (a place of worship or prayer) where he often used to sit in seclusion and absorb himself in meditation. It has been brought home to me by some of the friends that by such divine contemplation his will-power was considerably increased. Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra, afterwards President of the Bengal Legislative Council, who was with Subhas for all the months, told me that Subhas had made much advancement in religious matters.

But within a short time after he was here, came the thundering news of the passing away of Desh-bandhu Das which melancholy event took place at Darjeeling on June 16, 1925. It is no use telling here

how much the news mortified the whole band of Deshbandhu's faithful followers clapped in Mandalay Jail, as also elsewhere but all that we can say, for hours every body sat motionless, speechless and stranded at their wit's end, as if all were struck by thunder. Subhas for two days took no food nor spoke to any one. How much he felt the great shock will be evident from the two documents he left ; one a long letter to me regarding Deshbandhu which I had published in my *Deshbandhu Smriti*, and the other, an article in the Bengali Weekly Journal "*Atmasakti*". I have to resist temptation today from quoting his thoughts as contained in those in this short episode. All I can say is, that his conception of Deshbandhu was an embodiment of a Napoleon, a Buddha and a Vaishnava devotee—all the three combined together.

The treatment of political prisoners in general was very unsatisfactory. But the immediate event worthy of mention was that the political prisoners in the Mandalaya Jail performed *Durga Puja* in 1925 and *Saraswati Puja* in 1926, but the Government refusing to pay the expenses incurred by them, Subhas and his friends took the drastic step of resorting to hunger strike from February 20, 1926. Grievances of the political prisoners were acute, besides all the resolutions passed in the Bengal Legislative Council were

unheeded to and the local grievances and pin-pricks were too difficult for them to tolerate. Feelings of political prisoners ought to be a matter of concern to every body. They are detained without trial but are denied comforts in that helpless condition ! As a protest against the unsympathetic treatment of the Government both the Calcutta Corporation and the Bengal Legislative Assembly brought resolutions, but the one at the latter body was not even allowed to be moved by the speaker. Meetings in Calcutta and Mofussil were held and *Hartal* was observed. After the intercession of the President of the Congress and *Swarajya* party of Bengal with the promise that no stone will be left unturned, the prisoners at last broke the fast after many days. Moulana Soukat Ali was at that time in Burma. He too had seen the prisoners and intervened in the matter.

It was at such period that my "*Deshbandhu Smriti*" was nearing completion and I wrote to my colleagues to write reminiscences about Deshbandhu. Every one helped me by paying homage to our Leader, but the one by Subhas was a literature by itself. It was a twenty-four paged document and when I received it, tears came out of my eyes. He was then in fasting and yet did not feel the least reluctant to write. This was the forwarding letter—

Censored and passed.

3/3/26.

For D. I. G., I. B., C. I. D., Bengal.

Mandalay Jail.
24. 2. 26.

My dear Hemendra Babu,

Am sending reminiscences of Deshbandhu by today's mail. Have received your telegram and two letters. Have written the reminiscences in great hurry. Please imagine my condition and excuse all errors and short-comings. You may put in a note to that effect as well. Sorry I could not write a better thing in honour of Deshbandhu, but God's will must prevail. *Please revise the note yourself.*

Yours affly.,
Subhas Ch. Bose.

P. S. Please go through the note and *make any verbal corrections if necessary.* I have not been able to revise it.

S. C. B.

Hemendra Nath Das Gupta, Esq.,
31, Haldarpara Road,
Kalighat, Calcutta.

Four days after, he wrote another letter which would show how anxious he was for his inability to revise—

My dear Hemendra Babu,

I hope you have received my article on Deshbandhu which I posted on 24. 2. 26. In the attached letter I

requested you to revise the article on my behalf and make the necessary changes.

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I suppose you have heard all about the affairs here. So I need not write anything. As a matter of fact I have personally refrained from writing anything in my letters to you—lest they may be withheld by the censor.

Yours affly.,
Subhas Ch. Bose.

P. S. Please let me know about the *Seva-Asrama* in detail when you have time.

S. C. B.

After the above book was out two copies were sent to the Mandalay Jail. I felt happy that the book could give them some relief in the Jail life of my friends and they liked it very much. My esteemed friend Sj. Bepin Ganguli used to read the book in their Study-Circle. But only a few months after to my great sorrow, I heard that Subhas fell ill and became physically incapable of doing any active work of any kind. He lost weight also in an appalling degree. He used to get fever every day, felt pains all over the body and the condition became alarming.

* Here he makes one or two alterations. Photo of another letter is being given elsewhere.

His brother Dr. Sunil Bose came to see him in March, 1926 at the Mandalay Jail. Dr. Bose suspected Tuberculosis and recommended Subhas's stay at some Sanitarium in Switzerland. Soon after a proposal was made by the Hon'ble Mr. Moberly, Home Member to the Govt. of Bengal to the effect that two courses were open to Subhas either to stay in Jail or to go abroad outside India and stay in some healthy resort. He, however, preferred to stay in an Indian Jail rather to go abroad, away from parents and relations and be subjected to the espionage of watchers of other nationalities. Brave as he was, he insisted that it was the duty of the Government to restore him to health, as he had been in October, 1924, at the time of his arrest.

Towards the close of March, 1927, he was ordered to be transferred to the Central Jail, Insein (Burma) and his condition did not show any sign of improvement and he replied to the Government on April 11, in his usual self-respecting manner. As the condition caused anxiety he was sent by Government on May 12, 1927 from Rangoon in the "Eronda" ship. He reached Calcutta on the 14th May. No body got any clue as to his whereabouts till he was released on the 15th May.

It was at first contemplated to send him to Almora but he was afterwards let off at Calcutta. He was

so weak at the time that a bulletin was issued by the eminent physicians—Sir Nil Ratan Sarkar and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy asking outsiders not to cause any disturbance in that state of his health. Those however, who saw him, were all impressed with the same innocent smile and genial spirit as before.

His mother and other relatives were by his side and he felt relief at the sight of Srijukta Basanti Devi, Deshbandhu's worthy consort, who saw him after she had heard of his arrival.

The first statement he made on return to his house was very touching. Thus he writes :

"I come back to my home again. The first and principal work of mine is to recover from my lost health, as then only I shall be able to commence work I had left before. After my association with my friends the first thing that is strong in my mind is the remembrance of my friends there. I hope my countrymen will wish my health and recovery as then only, we shall be able to devote all heart and soul for the fulfilment of our cherished object."

The above statement was made against medical advice.

THIRD CHAPTER

As Congress-Leader of Bengal

After Subhas recovered and was in a fit condition to work, he began to think of taking over the congress work in his hand, which had practically reached a stage of stagnation. A little history of the Bengal Congress would not be out of place here.

After the *Sradh* ceremony of the great Deshbandhu, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta was given the triple crown of the President of the Congress, President of the Swaraj Party and Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation by Mahatma Gandhi who was then here. This was in the beginning of July, 1925. Before his death, thrice could Deshbandhu succeed in breaking the Diarchy and once threw out the Bengal Ordinance. It was at Faridpur Conference (May, 1925). Deshbandhu gave his programme of Honourable Co-operation in presence of Mahatmaji. Not only did the latter agree with it but Mahatmaji expressed, "Mr. Das has pitch-forked my thoughts. Only I could not have put in so beautiful and flowery a language as he did". But that speech was misunderstood by men who looked to the surface of the thing only. Even Pandit Jawaharlal observed that Deshbandhu's Faridpur

Maudslayi Jail

19. 10. 25.

My dear Memendra Babu,

I was glad to receive your note after a long time. I am sorry to hear of your financial difficulties and but I trust you will be able to travel soon.

I approve of your suggestion regarding opening a primary school.

I hope this will find you all going with it. I am

Yours. a. K. J.

Subhas

See Reference next page.

After the Belgaon Congress in 1924 the ban on Lawyers was removed. As Deshbandhu wanted me not to resume practice but to act as his Confidential Secretary, I did not follow Mr. B. N. Susmal and others. After Desbandhu's death I sought permission of Subhas, as Deshbandhu's representative. In reply he wrote this letter in four pages only. The first and the last portion are given here.

speech showed that he was tired. Tired of what ? of working and seeking rest ? Far from it. What Deshbandhu meant for all and gave it as his heritage has not been since improved in the least, singly or as a composite body. What he said was that we are willing to co-operate provided "Govt. release all political prisoners. (2) Give us freedom (Swaraj) within a time limit but they have at once to begin with a good gesture. (3) If they do not do that, we shall, as and when we think necessary, start Civil Disobedience."

I ask my leaders, has the country advanced a bit either in deed, speech, thoughts or opinions ? Twenty years after Panditji has been earnest in efforts at Simla and Delhi with the same idea of co-operation and if what the Congress wants is not conceded (i.e., if Cabinet Mission fail), Panditji would do the same thing here. I would therefore ask everybody to read carefully the speech of Deshbandu Chittaranjan and deny if this is not and has not always been the spirit of our Indian National Congress even up-to this day.

Be that as it may, Mahatmaji was also with Deshbandhu for a week at Darjeeling a few days before the latter breathed his last. During the great journey of the departed from Sealdah, Mahatmaji was the first pall-bearer. He then stayed at the house of Deshbandhu at 148, Russa Road and raised sufficient money for

the starting of *Chittaranjan Seva Sadan*. Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad was also at Calcutta at that time.

It was at this time Mahatmaji to keep up the continuity of Deshbandhu's work at Bengal asked the congress workers to choose Mr. Sen Gupta as their only leader and to pursue the unfinished work of the great leader. A few workers wished that Sen Gupta might be the Mayor and President of the Swarajya Party but some other persons having greater sacrifice should be chosen as the Congress President. But a better and abler man was not available. Besides Mahatmaji explained that as the work of the Swarajya Party was then the main work of the Congress as defined at the Belgaon Congress, both the functions should be combined in one and the same person.

It was some time ago a large number of persons hitherto detained were released and a body of workers known as *Karmisangha* was formed from amongst some of those in Calcutta with Mr. Amarendra Nath Chatterjee as President and Mr. Sures Das as Secretary and this body was at the beginning able to gather some strength and had some influence with Bengal politics till Subhas came to the forefront. They had tried to get Subhas elected a member of the Bengal Legislative Council and succeeded in unseating Mr. J. N. Basu from North Calcutta.

Now with a family to maintain, Mr. Sen Gupta

from now on till he was allowed to remain outside, made the best use of his talents and powers. He did everything with sincerity, was fearless to a degree and had a genial temper and winning disposition which even pleased his adversaries. Both as Mayor and Leader of the Congress in the Council-House, he was the apt pupil of Deshbandhu and none could have done better, but as President of a body which had to do organisation in all kinds of work in the province, he had limitations. However, everything proceeded smoothly for about a year till the Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Krishnagar in May, 1926.

Mr. B. N. Sasmal who had valiantly and successfully fought against the establishment of Union Boards in the Midnapore District and who had been really a worthy assistant of Deshbandhu in Bengal, was now asked to come out from Midnapore and preside at the Provincial conference at Krishnagar, a request which he gladly acceded to. In his address, which in other respects was a courageous exposition of the Hindu-Mussalman Pact that had been enunciated by Deshbandhu, he made however a tactless blunder in making some scathing criticism of the members of the Secret Societies whom he objected to be included in the Executive Council of the B. P. C. C. In private conversations, too, he named some persons who were said to have approached and asked him to withdraw

his candidature for the post of the Chief Executive Officer in favour of Subhas. I call this a blunder indicating want of tact in the sense that to single out persons without any proof whatsoever is nothing but mud-singling. Protests were however made in the conference itself and he vacated his seat rather in a dignified manner and walked away till the Congress President Mrs. Sorojini Naidu who had been invited to attend the conference, appealed to the delegates in the name of democracy and succeeded in patching up the matter between them and their President Mr. Sasmal.

Differences on the next day arising as to expunging of the matters objected to, Sasmal left his seat again in the same dignified manner as before and confusion arose. After the party reached Calcutta, the B. P. C. C. under the presidency of Mr. Sen Gupta and Sj. Kiran Sankar Roy assisting, got some important resolutions including "Hindu-Mussalman Pact" passed on June 13, 1926. which had been unconstitutionally rejected at the conference after Mr. Sasmal's resignation. This gave rise to some differences between Messrs. Sen Gupta, Kiran Sankar Roy and others on one side and the members of the *Karmisangha* and a few persons on the other. In that meeting, the former was successful in getting the Council of the B. P. C. C. dissolved and a new one substituted to

the exclusion of the members of *Karmisangha*. Srijuts-Nirmal Chunder Chanda, Sarat Ch. Bose, Tulsi Charan Goswami, Nalini Ranjan Sarker and Bidhan Chandra Roy in sympathy issued a manifesto on the present situation and works before the Country. Mr. P. K. Chakraborty, the Editor of Forward and a friend of Mr. Sen Gupta was discharged. His editorial on "Contraband Carriers", was banned by the Managing Director, Forward. The article however saw the light of the day in "Daily Basumti". It was from this time the five gentlemen above named used to be called as "*Big Five*", in Bengal politics.

But as the Council election was to be held that year, about three months' after, an Election Board was formed on compromise with Dr. Bidhan Roy as Secretary and Mr. Sen Gupta as President. Elections returned majority of the congress members in the legislatures.

In the B. P. C. C. elections held in Nov., 1926, Sen Gupta owing to his past experience did not go in for the presidentship and Srijukta Basanti Devi's name was proposed without her consent. Eventually Prof. Jitendra Lal Banerjee was elected as the President and Mr. B. N. Sasmal as Secretary. The Corporation elections would soon follow, but again some notable citizens stood in the way of the mufasil people's intervening in city's affairs. A vote of no-confidence

was brought against the Executive Council by the party of *Big Five* in which Sen Gupta too with his group participated, but the body did not resign and proceeded on with elections. The Working Committee of the Congress was then referred to, which, through wire, appointed a Selection-Board consisting of Presidents and Secretaries of the five districts of Calcutta and 24 Parganas concerned with the Calcutta Corporation-matters with powers to Co-opt. Sen Gupta became Mayor again for the year 1927-28 too and was also a power in the Council but the Congress organisation remained in the same moribund but disordered condition as before.

At such a time, Subhas's appearance in his field of work was hailed by all persons—friend or foe. Subhas took up the work and received the heartiest co-operation from all sides. Certain circumstances concerning him also stood him in great stead. He was simple in life, a teetotaler, able to devote whole time and was simple in dress, in habits and manners. His past experience was also his asset and he received the heartiest welcome from all. Never in the history of Bengal-politics did a leader obtain such ungrudging co-operation from all sides as Subhas did. Mr. Sen Gupta too welcomed the move, *Karmisangha* though chucked out did not enter into active opposition, *Big Five* was practically left out but Subhas called his old

associates and took some of them into the executive. I had thus to join as a member of the Executive council, B.P.C.C. with Subhas as the President and S.J. Kiran Sankar Roy, the Secretary. I can also bear testimony to the fact that Subhas used always to see Mr. Sen Gupta and take his counsels and no body could question his best motives and sincerity of purpose. Mr. Sen Gupta too pulled on very well with Subhas, until a body of disappointed workers rallied round him and set him up again as rival leader to Subhas.

Here I would pause again to make some comment on the attitude of the members of rival groups of the *Jugantar* and *Anusilan* parties. Some of the members of these two groups had formerly been of the terrorist organisation but many of them joined the congress activities and pledged themselves to non-violence. They however brought their party with them and *influenced the Bengal politics very much*. There was also a third party *Atmonnati* of Bepin Babu, in which some Calcutta men were prominent members. Babu Santosh Mitra also (afterwards a victim of unauthorised firing in Hijli Detention Camp) belonged to this body. The first row was with regard to Mitter who was attacked by some members of other parties in a meeting at the Howrah Town Hall, organised to give Subhas a reception in the year 1928 and Subhas's silence was

taken as his consent in the insult of Mitter. This was the germ of the misunderstanding.

I noticed however a sad scene while in his reply mentioning Deshbandhu in obeisance Subhas could not restrain his feelings and had to be made to sit down with torrents of tears falling on his cheeks.

The first noticeable thing was however the Bengal Provincial Conference that was held in April, 1928 under the presidency of Mr. Sen Gupta at Basirhat. Subhas conducted the affairs as methodically as possible and was all regardful to Mr. Sen Gupta. But a party was just creeping against him and in the same, a few of North Calcutta and Karmisangha group seemed to lean against.

The next thing was Subhas's candidature for the Mayoralty. He rightly approved of the idea of having a look on Corporation affairs which have again become muddy partly owing to non-supervision and partly owing to party squabbles. On hearing that Subhas was the candidate, Mr. Sen Gupta too as an honourable person held back and began to help him. A rival candidate was however elected for the Mayoral chair, in the person of Mr. B. K. Basu of the Liberal Party, and those against Subhas began to find fault with him, for supersession of Mr. Sen Gupta.

Now as to the year's incidents the most important thing was the arrival of the Royal Commission in

in 1928 (early part), known as the Simon Commission appointed to examine the fitness of Indian people for Self-Government. The Indian National Congress, the Khilafat Conference, the Liberal Federation, The Hindu Mahasabha and the Trades Union Congress decided to boycott the Commission and the work of the Congress in Bengal was conducted by Subhas in this direction. The cry of processionists in the line of two or three each was 'Go Back Simon'. At Calcutta there was some clash at one place between the Police and students but at Lahore the most tragic incident was that Lala Rajpat Rai leading a gathering to demonstrate 'Go Back', was beaten with lathies by policemen and the result of the injuries he received brought about his end so early—such sad a catastrophe for the whole of the Indian nation.

It was about this time 'Deoghur Conspiracy Case' was being tried at Deoghur and one of the accused was Pandit Dhara Nath Bhattacharja, an old congress-man who was a leading worker of Hugly District. I had already to defend some accused there. Dhara Nath wanted B. P. C. C. to send a lawyer, preferably Mr. B. N. Sasmal, but Mr. Sasmal could not go and Subhas requested me for him to take up the case on behalf of the B. P. C. C. I did and Dhara Nath was acquitted. Subhas's joy knew no bounds

and henceforth he put me in charge as legal adviser to the matters relating to the case against the 'Forward Publishing Company', brought by the East Indian Railway for certain comments appearing in the paper in connection with a railway accident at Belur. My duty was only to weigh evidence.

The most important event of the year was the holding of the Congress session at Calcutta in December, 1928 at Park Circus under the Presidency of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Here Subhas organised a trained band of volunteers—men and women—and he was the General Officer Commanding. They looked as military volunteers in discipline, in dress and in performance. He got the Reception Committee to sanction a large amount for the costumes of volunteers as in his opinion without uniforms, military training was not possible. His department was that of a General in battle field. When the feats were shown to the President Pandit Motilal Nehru, I remember his constant calls 'Volunteers fall in' and how he acquitted himself most creditably. After the performance was over, we met and in the midst of others he asked me how I liked his performance. Really speaking, I did not like much the staging of a thing which was foreign. I now find how foolish I was. It was really a stage-rehearsal of a great feat which he would actually be destined to demonstrate

in the real field of activity. Another thing I carefully noted was his absolute unconcern over the fair sex, although hundreds of lady volunteers had to come near, and take orders and lessons from him. In his manners and dealings he was as dignified as ever. This strength of his character was a rare asset for the nation and this I am sure was the secret how he could inspire the same amount of regards and devotion in the ladies of the I. N. A.

The last thing of importance was the Congress itself. The resolution on Independence or Dominion Status was the knotty question of the day for the delegates. In the last Congress at Madras (1927) the resolution as sponsored by Jawaharlal and passed in the open Session was "the goal of the Congress and Indian people consisted in the complete Independence of India." But in the year as a protest against the Statutory Commission, the All Parties' Conference at Calcutta accepted the recommendations of the Nehru Committee for complete Dominion Status as a great step towards political advance. Pandit Motilal while endorsing the views of congressmen for independence as their goal, wanted the Congress to accept this as the largest common measure *for all parties* of the country. But this Pandit Jawaharlal in his peculiar position at that time could neither accept nor throw aside, as both he and Subhas were members of the

Independence League, formed shortly before at Lucknow and besides the Madras resolution on Independence had been sponsored by him.

In the Subjects Committee of Calcutta Session, a compromise had been arrived at. Accepting the same it was settled that if Independence be not given by 31st December, 1929, the Congress would go in for complete Independence from the next session. When Subhas came out of the Subjects Committee he was however pestered with questions by his followers, who liked him not to give up 'Independence Resolution' under any circumstances. He had thus to move amendment in the open session although Mahatmaj and Pandit Motilal wanted everybody to stand by his word. The main resolution as moved by Gandhiji, was however passed and Subhas's amendment lost. Nobody can and should find fault with him for his principle and the cause which he and his friends held so dear. The decision did not however cause any bitter feeling as I felt from personal experience between the voters or leaders but party spirit became ere long very acute. The *Jugantar* party supporting him and the *Anusilan* party supporting Mr. Sen Gupta began to fall out, and the excuse was the difference on ideology and how inspite of his whirlwind campaign during the council elections of 1929, he made a number of

enemies who taxed his patience to the maximum throughout the whole year inspite of earnest labours for the success of his Congress, we reserve to mention in short in the next chapter.

An untoward event happened while the Congress was in session in Calcutta. There was a rally of 50000 labourers organised by some disappointed friends who were not well disposed to him, and the Congress High Command. As G. O. C. he felt it his duty to resist their entry, but Pandit Motilal and Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta allowed them in. After staying two hours and hearing Mahatmaji and Pandit Jawaharlal they retired without any row.

FOURTH CHAPTER

The Struggle ahead—(1929—32)

As a Leftist

After the Congress terminated at Calcutta with the excellent and orderly management by the volunteers, Subhas had the next year (1929) of ceaseless work passed through bitter party squabbles.

The Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Rungpur on April 2, 1927, under the Presidency of Subhas who stressed greatly on the importance of raising disciplined volunteers in the country. He considered the conference a success from every point of view, whether from the point of volunteers' organisation or boycott of foreign cloth and British goods. Enthusiasm of ladies was also great. Mr. Sen Gupta who had been elected Mayor this year was specially wired to by Subhas to attend the conference which he did. Feelings were still cordial and when Subhas as leader of the Congress ran elections in councils he got Sen Gupta's help. The Government of Bengal under Sir Stanley Jackson, unable to form a stable ministry dissolved the Bengal Legislative Council and ordered a new General election. Dates of elections were in May and June and like Deshbandhu, Subhas had to make a whirlwind campaign throughout Bengal. On May 13,

he attended at the Chittagong Conference with Profs. Nripendra Banerjee, Jyotish Ghosh and Mrs. Latika Bose and others and after that went to Sylhet, Moulvibazar where he met his old friend Babu Ananga Mohan Dam, then to Dacca, Mymensing, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna and other places.

I shall give an instance of the kind of work he had to undergo not once or twice but through the whole period covering about two to three months.

Early June he wished me to accompany him in his tour at the Diamond Harbour-side to support the electioneering campaign of the Congress candidate Mr. Sashi Sekhar Bose, against whom was set up Babu Phani Bhusan Banerjee, our old enthusiastic worker of South Calcutta. Mr. Banerjee belonged to the Sasmal group and was fortunate in getting the whole-hearted support of Mr. Sasmal himself and his follower Babu Charu Chandra Bhandari (now a Congress M. L. A.). As Diamond Harbour was a place where Mahisyas predominate, support of Messrs. Sasmal and Bhandari both of whom are leaders of the community, counted much and Subhas had to fight against odds. Still he fought valiantly and with great dignity. His speeches were not at all directed to personal attacks but stressed on Congress discipline alone. Some day in the first part of June, he picked me up by previous arrangement from my residence at 31, Haldarpara Road, Kalighat

at about 3 P. M. We then drove to Radhanagar and spoke in the assemblage of Poundras (Podes) where both sides depicted them as descendants of the time of the Mahabharata. Babu Hem Chandra Nasker (Ex-Mayor, Calcutta Corporation and M. L. A.) and Babu Manmotha Nath Roy (Ex-M. L. A.), Advocate High Court, the former of Poundra and the latter of Mahisya Community accompanied us. That was the day when *Podes* of the place took sacred thread. We next spoke in three or four meetings and the last at the Mandirer Bazar High School where we bade good bye to the people at 11 P. M., reaching home after 1 A. M. next morning.

On that day again we left home in a car at about 2 P. M. We then went to Amtalla, Sakerhat, Sarishahat, and spoke in fiery meetings where both sides were prepared with heavy guns. At Diamond Harbour near the court-compound just on the Hoogly river where the temperature cooled down a bit, we spoke to the delight of the pleaders and others, and were treated to refreshments in the house of Babu Pratap Gangulee, pleader. We then left for Kulpi Hat where a big meeting was addressed by both Subhas and myself. We left at 10 P. M. reaching Karanjali at 11-30 P. M. where the Ghosh Babus, particularly Babu Bepin Bihari Ghosh received us very cordially and treated us to a sumptuous night-meal. Bringing the Ghose Babus, the most

influential in the locality to our side, Subhas left with us at 12-30 A. M. and within the three miles in a field the car stopped, as we learnt, for shortage of petrol. We were thus stranded in a place in the Sunderban area with jungles near by and animals howling yonder. But what Subhas did was most daring. He asked us (myself & S. J. Sasadhar Chakraverty) to sleep in the car, while for himself he spread a sheet on the ground and slept the rest of the night there, just as peacefully as one does at home. Such was his fearlessness which fairly bespoke how he would fare in battle field too. In the morning asking us to conduct a meeting in a village near by, he left on foot walking ten miles to the nearest Railway station at Laksmikantapur. I, of course, asked him to wait and not walk so long a distance in that quarter, but the reply that came was—

“You are not talking sense, Hem Babu. I have to dispose of all important matters of the province awaiting me at Calcutta and should I be here now, inspite of the place ?”

These two days' hardships were felt by me but how many days he passed this way without sleep, rest, sometimes food there was no number. The elections however brought him results to his satisfaction.

It was at this time that there was some difference between the President of the Central Legislative Council Sardar Vithalbhai Patel and the Viceroy about the

former's ruling in the council debates. Lord Irwin who had just come from England after four months' leave made also a disappointing announcement about India's future. Congress Working Committee therefore on July 15, (from Delhi) wishing members of various legislatures to resign their seats referred the matter to A. I. C. C. to be held at Allahabad on July, 1929. Pandit Motilal himself wrote letters to all provincial leaders. But Subhas raised a strong protest against abstention and was supported by Mr. Jamunadas Mehta, Dr. Alam, Mr. Satyamurti and others. He thought boycott would be suicidal and breach of faith to the electorate. The A. I. C. C. however in view of general feeling of the country postponed abstention till after the Lahore Session of the Congress in December, 1929.

It was in 1929 the 'Lahore Conspiracy Enquiry and Trial' commenced at Lahore in which amongst others Bhagat Sing and Botukeswar Dutt who had already been sentenced to transportation for life for having been in possession of bombs in the Hall of the Central Legislative Assembly at Delhi and also Sree Jatin Das of Bengal figured as accused persons. One of the overt acts of the conspiracy was the murder of Mr. Sandaurs, Superintendent of Police, Lahore, in April, 1929 who was reported to have given orders to assault Lala Rajpat Rai's party.

In the course of the trial Jatin Das, the Bengal-

hero as a protest against the cruel treatment meted out to the under-trial prisoners, began to fast from June, 1929 and at last succumbed to at the Borstal Jail, Lahore, on Sept. 13 on the sixty-fourth day of fast. This produced a thrill of sensation to the whole of India, and Bengal demonstrated a feeling of admiration and grief when the dead body of Jatin, brought to Calcutta from Lahore, was passed in an extraordinarily huge and extremely dense procession from Howrah Town Hall to the *Keoratola* ghat. The open session of the Congress at Lahore also expressed deep appreciations of the supreme self-sacrifice of Jatin Das and Phoonji Wizaya, another prisoner in Rangoon Jail who after 164 days breathed his last there. Subhas took a very keen interest and as worthy of the leader sent telegrams to all intermediate stations to arrange ice, water and other convenience for the party. He had sent also some money to Kiran, Jatin's brother who was accompanying the body although the local leaders Drs. Satya Pal and Alam spared nothing undone. Jatin had worked as a volunteer of South Calcutta under me and I felt a unique pride in carrying the body and accompanying the pall-bearers all along the route. Subhas led and was all attention. In fact he managed everything wonderfully.

Earlier in the midst of the fast undertaken by Jatin, Bhagat Singh and Botukeswar, the Calcutta workers

observed 4th & 11th August, 1929 as the Political Suffers' Day and held meetings. On the 4th a meeting was held at Harish Park in which Mr. Amarendra Chatterjee and the present writer spoke. On the 11th a huge meeting was held at the Town Hall under the presidency of Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta when Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. J. Choudhury and others spoke feelingly.

Before the meeting was held, a procession led by Subhas, President, S. J. Kiran Sankar Roy, Secretary, B. P. C. C., Dr. J. M. Das Gupta, President, Barabazar Congress Committee, Sardar Balwant Sing, Prem Sing (Now Juan), Dharendra Mukherjee, Secretary, S.C.C., Major Satya Gupta, leader of volunteers, Susil Banerjee, Arbinda Mukerjee, Benoy Roy Choudhury and a few others had passed from Hazra Park to the Town Hall with shouts of 'Bande Mataram', 'Inclub Zindabad', 'Liberty or death', "Heroes have anointed the forehead of their heroic mothers with blood on the banks of the five rivers (*Beer-gan Jananeere Rakta Tilak Lalate Paralo, Panchanadeer Tire*)". The above persons were put under arrest by Bhowanipur Police and sent up under charges 120B & 124A of the Indian Penal Code—conspiracy and sedition. Trial in the court of Mr. K. L. Mukherjee, Special Magistrate, Alipore, took about three to four months and I was one of the lawyers engaged to appear

on behalf of them along with Mr. B. C. Chatterjee (now no more), Mr. N. R. Das Gupta (now President, Calcutta Improvement Trust Tribunal) and a few junior friends. As Messrs. Chatterjee and Das Gupta had to attend High Court now and then, I had to remain the whole day and the cross-examination of some witnesses especially of the Punjabi witness Monsha Sing Dukhi, Inspector Sampuran Sing and others had to be conducted by me with special attention to *Guru Granth Saheb*. Times out of number we had to draw attention of the Magistrate to the irregularities of a few Police Sergeants and Constables committed now and again to the great annoyance of our clients and I remember on one occasion when Mr. N. R. Das Gupta was bitterly criticising the vagaries of the prosecuting police, how Subhas felt greatly ejaculated.

In October, Subhas was to leave for Lahore to preside at the Students' Conference there. Mr. Suresh Chandra Talukdar, a leading Advocate, High Court who appeared with us some days, took permission for Subhas to leave Calcutta. But the Magistrate finding him (Subhas) absent on the second day of hearing i.e., on Oct. 22, insisted on his presence. There was some misunderstanding somewhere, and a telegram was sent to him when he was halting at Delhi and he left in haste. Mr. Talukdar mentioned it in Court and the matter was dropped. When Subhas arrived at the

Howrah Station, both Kiran Sanker Babu and myself were there and accompanied him to 1, Woodburn Park at Mr. Sarat Bose's house.

Now about his Punjab tour, Subhas started with Kiran Das on the 14th October from Howrah and reached Amritsar on the 16th and was received by Dr. Kichlew there. From there they came through a car to Lahore. On the way to the house of his host Dr. Dharambeer and his wife, there was a huge procession. Asked to avoid the crowd, Subhas's reply was—"Crowd of my country is not my enemy." He was taken to Bradlough Hall where the conference was held with Sj. Monomohini Jutsi as Chairman of the Reception Committee.

His speech was very much appreciated and here he referred to the Asiatic upheaval and consciousness on which the great Deshbandhu had built great hopes. It was at the Calcutta Session (1928) Congress had also expressed satisfaction at the exploits of China and some other countries of Asia. One thing however which endeared Subhas most to the Young Punjab was his strictness in asking the Police to vacate the hall as admission was by cards and the Police had not possessed any cards of entry. He expressed with dignity that he would be justified to take any means in ejecting people without cards, be they police or not, but that must be by non-violent means.

After this those without cards including the police, left the hall.

As president he also referred to the youth and students, organisation and eulogised Jatin Das as the *Young Dadhichi of India*.

Subhas after finishing his work went to court and saw the Lahore prisoners. He was two hours in court but was not allowed to talk with any of the accused.

He then came by Amritsar, Jullundar and Ludhiana by car and thence to Meerut by train. He attended the court where the Meerut trial with Mr. Langford James as the prosecuting Council was being held. There was nothing to mention except that he had been searched by police at Ambala if any arms could be found but without success. At Delhi he was a guest to Dr. Ansari and was invited to dine with President V. J. Patel and had to cancel further engagements as the following telegram from Kiran Sanker Babu relating to the Alipore trial reached him—

“Postponment refused, please start”.

But the most worrying thing was the party-spirit and the B.P.C.C. election for the Presidentship. Mr. Sen Gupta as I told before, was not president in 1926, he hailed Subhas as president in 1927, and in 1928 too he did not oppose Subhas with whom feelings were friendly at that time. But in the election this year

(1929) Sen Gupta was set up by the rival groups consisting of "Anusilan, Atmonnati party of Sj. Bepin Gangulee, Khadi groups and Anandabazar group", Subhas having his old friends and Jugantar party en block to his side.

When party feelings run high, even the leaders have to do many things which strictly are not just or legitimate and I have no intention to support Subhas in every thing he did nor should I for a moment urge that Subhas could not have stopped all these if he wanted to see his province free from all petty quarrels, making sacrifices of any kind, for which there was no dearth in him in any kind. But after all Subhas was the whole time worker and had held discipline then above everything. Conscientiously speaking, Presidentship of the Bengal Congress could not fittingly adorn any other person at the time than Subhas. Under such circumstances I would apportion greater responsibility on Mr. Sen Gupta, since cognisant fully that it was not possible for him to devote whole time, he did not make up differences with Subhas in the interests of the province, but allowed himself to be the leader of all disjointed groups who wanted to set him up as a rival to the president with the obvious object of humbling down Subhas. As I already expressed, Sen Gupta otherwise was a decent, well-meaning and dignified man and sympathy recently further centered round him than

before for his injured innocence as Mayor and the sportsman-like spirit to bear attacks in the manner of a gentleman as he was. This gave him an advantage which was worked upon to its best by his followers and sympathisers.

Now as to details, when the elections of the Executive Council of B.P.C.C. came on November, 16, 1929, on the first date with regard to the elections of some districts, Sylhet, Cachar, Chittagong and Darjeeling, point of order being raised as to the validity of elections, Subhas decided against the movers. Next in the elections of co-oped members, the strength was measured as 124 for Subhas against 118. As the result of presidential election was a foregone conclusion, Sriyuts J. L. Banerjee, Pramotha Banerjee, Dr. Profulla Ghose, Prof. Jyotish Ghosh, Pratul Gangulee, Bepin Gangulee, Dr. Bhupendra Dutt, Suresh Mozumder, Monoranjan Banerjee, Hemanta Bose, Rabindra Sen, Amarendra Chatterjee, Nishit Kundu and others left the meeting.

Mr. Sudhir Roy, son-in-law of Deshbandhu Das hearing this, tried an amicable settlement which however failed. What actually took place in the meeting at Mr. Sen Gupta's house at 10, Elgin Road, and when both Subhas and Sen Gupta met with dignity as friends, will be clear from the following conversation which is given below where Subhas was practically

pestered with questions, as to the validity of his rulings with regard to Chittagong, Sylhet and other places.

But Subhas was dignified. He said :—"I won't discuss about the validity of my ruling but I have come to see if any compromise is possible."

Mr. J. C. Gupta :—"Compromise is possible if Subhas Babu gives up policy of exclusion and clique, and if he nullifies co-option."

Subhas was accompanied by Messrs. Satyendra Mitra, Sudhir Roy, and Dr. K. S. Roy and the other side was represented by Prof. Joytis Ghosh, Messrs. Bepin Gangulee, Suresh Mozumder, Pratul Gangulee, and J. C. Gupta.

Prof. Jyotish argued :—(1) There was no truth that this was a personal fight by Sen Gupta. (2) But there was propaganda against him, since he was elected Mayor last time. (3) Good workers are maligned as spies.

Syamapada—"There has been propaganda against Mr. Sen Gupta regarding Sukhendu's (Chittagong) death."

Bepin Babu—"Khulna and Chittagong elections are irregular."

Dr. Prafulla Ghose—"Kiron Sanker Babu had stated in a letter to the press that Sen Gupta lost confidence with congressmen. Hence it was abso-

lutely necessary to vindicate his position by having him as president this year."

Mr. J. C. Gupta—"Subhas Babu should give up policy of exploiting youth and students."

Sj. Suresh Mazumder—"Subhas Babu is trying to capture the North Calcutta Youth."

Sj. Pratul referred to the trouble created in the Students' association at Mymensing and to detailed proceedings of Sj. Suren Ghosh in this connection.

It is no use to trouble our readers further with these controversies. All to be said is that the compromise was not possible and on the 17th the new executive council was formed. But one thing was specially noticeable. The decorum of Mr. Sen Gupta was as exemplary as Subhas remained unruffled all through in the discussions.

The matter however went to the Working Committee of the Congress at Allahabad. Pandit Motilal Nehru the president took up the matter himself. He deputed Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramiya to make the preliminary enquiry.

In the meantime, a dispute arose between Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta and Dr. Bidhan Roy, Chairman and General Secretary of the Reception Committee respectively with regard to the adoption of accounts of the Congress Session, in the meeting (Mr. Suresh Mazumder

having shown some discrepancy). Mr. Sen Gupta left the meeting, as was said, in disgust.

Thus when the tension of feelings between the rival groups was very high, Dr. P. Sitaramiya reached Calcutta in the first week of December, 1929.

Subhas's party represented by Mr. Kiron Sanker Roy appeared at first, but owing to some difference in the conduct of affairs, withdrew eventually. Dr. Pattabhi made an adverse report about the treatment he had received, and after charges and counter-charges were made in writing, the matter came up before the All India Congress Committee at Lahore previous to the holding of the Congress Session and the committee presented a scene of unusual excitement, when the President Pandit Motilal considering his integrity and honour assailed through writings of Subhas in the Press, put up with the charges Subhas had brought against him—(1) "That I appointed Dr. Sitaramiya without consulting Subhas for reasons best known to me." (2) "That I passed ex parte orders after hearing J. C. Gupta and Satish Das Gupta."

With regard to point No. 1, Pandit Motilal's contention was that he had consulted Subhas and he agreed. Dr. Bidhan Roy supported Panditji. As to second charge, Panditji referred to Dr. Ansari, Moulana Azad, S. J. Rafiq Ahmed Kidwai and others.

It is no use to reproduce the heat engendered in the meeting but good sense prevailed. Subhas said he expressed regret if any impression was created by his statement in the mind of the President or any member of the Working Committee in the house—a feeling which was immediately endorsed by Pt. Motilal whose words ought still to ring in the ears of those present. Pandit Motilal said the following words in a feeling voice :—
 “I fully or frankly accept the expression of regret with the consent of my colleagues of W.C. I also accept it.”
 The scene was so touching that Dr. Alum could not restrain his feelings when he said—

“So after all this, I must say we have now learnt how our leaders can quarrel and how they can generously make up.”

The dignified and charming statement of Subhas which brought lull to the atmosphere is also worth-mentioning. Thus Subhas proceeded :

“I would try to give a dispassionate view of the whole thing. As far as I remember I never agreed to Dr. Pattabhi's name. I may affirm once again that I have never questioned Pt. Motilal Nehru's honesty. I believed and I still believe if Panditji takes up the whole matter even now, he can not only settle the question but settle it amicably. Because I did not want to be unnecessarily hasty that I did not say anything when Dr. Pattabhi's name was suggested and specially so because Dr. Pattabhi himself did not agree

to accept the matter. It may be that the matter was discussed in my absence. Any how I did not know anything about Dr. Pattabhi being appointed as Commissioner.

"I may again make it clear that I have scrupulously avoided saying anything which might be offensive to Panditji. He is like my father (hear, hear) and I may assure him that it has never been my desire to cast any aspersion or insinuation against him. Everybody who knows something about the *Swarajya Party* knows what my feelings were for the late Deshbandhu and I still entertain such feeling towards Panditji. I appreciate if this unfortunate statement had not been published, there would have been no trouble."

Next it was settled that Pandit Motilal himself would go to Calcutta and give his award. He came to Calcutta on the 11th June, 1929 and gave his award on June 20, upholding the elections of Sylhet and Darjeeling and setting aside that of Chittagong and some more co-options. He expressed that rowdyism at the Chittagong meeting of the 21st September, 1929 while some persons got injured was the most disgraceful in a congress meeting. It was then settled that from the body then formed after Chittagong members are returned, a member of Bogra will be co-opted by all members.*

* B. P. C. C. was then composed of 268 elected, 32 co-opted by 32 districts, 14 co-opted Mohammedans, 10 co-opted ladies making a total of 324 members.

In the conclusion of the report Pandit Motilal appealed to Bengal leaders to avoid unfortunate grouping of staunch congressmen into hostile camps and wished them to unite for the common goal of the country.

But what became of the members of the All India Congress Committee in the A. I. C. C. and Subjects Committee at Lahore who were elected by the new B.P.C.C.? At the intercession of Dr. B. C. Roy, all the old (1928) and present (1929) members were allowed to take part in the discussion as the total number (old and new) did not exceed the quota of members from Bengal. Thus was the election dispute patched up for the time being.

We have not yet finished about the Lahore Session of the Congress—*The most momentous session where the Independence Resolution was passed*, as moved by Mahatma Gandhi himself. Subhas was not still satisfied. He suggested the formation of a 'Parallel Government' on the lines of Irish Sinn Fein. He grumbled as to why was one year's time lost for nothing, when work could have commenced last year after having passed the Independence Resolution. But Mahatmaji in reply said that the suggestion of Parallel Government was good in paper no doubt, but it was impossible under the present circumstances to carry it out. He pertinently

asked where was the required discipline, organisation or strength for running a Parallel Government? He exclaimed what are we going to do, Heaven only knows.

Subhas's amendment was lost.

After the conclusion of the Congress Session, the A. I. C. C. met and a list of names was proposed by Mahatma Gandhi as members of the Working Committee for 1930. Mahatmaji expressed that members of W. C. should be of one mind. President Pandit Jawaharlal also said that it was a convention in the A.I.C.C. that the list of names proposed by the President and the Working Committee should be accepted by the House without opposition. Some members wished that the minority should be represented and the persons like Sjs, Subhas Chandra Bose, Srinibas Ayanger and T. Prakasam should be there. Mr. Jamunalal Bajaj wanted the resolution of Mahatma to be put to vote. The sense of the committee was in its favour. Votes were taken and Mahatmaji's resolution was carried. As the amendment was not allowed, Subhas and others (62 in all) walked out of the A. I. C. C. meeting.

They said it was not constitutional and Subhas felt that he was unjustly treated by the A. I. C. C. meeting. Whether the procedure as adopted by the President was constitutional or not I shall say nothing at present but in fairness to both

sides, I feel it my duty to put here statements of Pandit Jawahar and Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, too, who deplored the spirit and laid stress on the convention, according to which no doubt it was admissible for members to suggest other names for acceptance by the President and if the President accepted the names there was an end of the matter, as otherwise the position of the President would be innocuous if he be surrounded by men opposed to his views.

Mr. Sen Gupta quoted also the example of Deshbandhu Das who in Gaya (1922) refused to shoulder the responsibility of being in the executive when he found the others were opposed to his policy. Mr. Sen Gupta was further surprised that "Certain men from Bengal who not only opposed the main resolution but supported every amendment to it, should now insist that some of them should be in the cabinet to carry out the very policy which they had strenuously objected to".

Pandit Jawahar did not like to enter into controversy but said that the list had been prepared by him in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi and several other members of the Working Committee who came to assist him nor he considered the resolution of Mr. Bajaj as undemocratic. Yet he took the sense of the meeting in addition. He however, wondered that on the very day

the momentous resolution on Independence had been passed, a body of staunch congressmen should oppose them with peculiar tactics, which he considered reprehensible.

But Subhas had his own conscience and he thought he could best serve the country by starting *Congress Democratic Party* which he formed on January 2, 1930, at Lajpat Rai Nagar, Lahore, with the same goal of Independence and to reform the Congress organisations on broader and more democratic basis. He also wired to Srijukta Basanti Devi and asked for her blessings in the following words :—"Circumstances and tyranny of majority forced us to form a separate party as at Gaya. Pray, spirit of Deshbandhu may guide us and your blessings may inspire us."

Subhas felt that when minority was trampled down, the best thing for him was to form a new party. He said, "A day will come when Congress will rid itself of the *imperialistic and capitalistic* influences."

For Subhas to secede and form another party with more forward views, there was nothing wrong from the principle of democracy. He lacked none in the spirit of independence and his view-point was that as "There is a grim struggle ahead, the country would not allow the spirit of petty tyranny and intolerance to the minority." He however was definite that his party had no

intention of disobeying the Congress direction which for the present consisted in the resignations of congressmen from Legislatures only.

Controversies aside, this year's Congress session (1929) was the most momentous one for the country and formed the stepping stone for congressmen to become once again fit to attain complete freedom and Subhas shared it as much as anybody did. But within a few days he had to leave the field of work and began to live in jail away from the pale of his activities and the regret is that not an inch was moved by his companions and followers who had been loudest at the meeting but sat still after his imprisonment. They preferred rather to enjoy the court debates in addressing the judges as 'Your Lordships' forgetting Subhas and their loyalty to Congress, while Pandit Jawaharlal and others were strenuously working out plans for the independence of the country. This fully demonstrates how shaky the all India friends (some of South India and Bengal) of Subhas of 1929 were and by the time he was released Sept., 1930 and came out of jail, the *Congress Democratic Party* had long been forgotten. It was not since heard of any longer.

Now about the political case, on the 23rd of January, 1930 Subhas and 11 others were found

guilty by Mr. K. L. Mukherjee, Special Magistrate, Alipore and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for one year each for leading a procession whose cry was 'Independence' and although the evidence was that non-violence was observed all through by the whole body of processionists. It was a pity and an irony of fate that the first victim after the Independence Resolution was India's most valiant son—Subhas Chandra Bose. The president Pandit Jawaharlal of all others congratulated him first on his being the first sufferer after the momentous resolutions of Lahore.

Arguments in the case were made by Mr. B. C. Chatterjee, Bar-at-law and it was the best and grandest I could ever conceive of from lawyers then living. Alas! Mr. Chatterjee who held high regards and great affection for Subhas, is no more.

Appeal was then preferred against convictions and sentences, but Justices Pearson and Patterson while admitting the appeal granted bail on certain conditions, which Subhas considered too humiliating to accept, consistently with his self-respect, dignity and position. He preferred to remain in jail with Kiran Sankar Babu, Dr. Das Gupta and some of his companions—a position for which Mahatma Gandhi expressed the heartiest congratulations.

Pandit Jawaharlal then chalked out plans how best

could the Independence Day be observed on the 26th January, 1930. Congress-pledge as newly amended began to be read from hundreds of platforms and national flags to be raised. Since the year 1930, January 26 has been always observed as the Day of Independence and Firm Resolve.

Pandit Motilal Nehru the leader of Central Assembly in pursuance of the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. asked members of the Legislatures to resign. Subhas did as soon as he was asked and many followed him, but some did not and it was height of indiscipline that they listened not to. Of all others, I have to mention two instances with the greatest pain—one was that of an esteemed friend of us Mr. Satyendra Mitra, once Secretary of Deshbandhu and the other was of Mr. Satyamurti who had walked out from the A. I. C. C. and formed with Subhas the Congress Democratic Party. If they resigned and sought re-election, they would have acted rightly. But both of them, after all, were patriots and we have still our high regards for them.

Now as to Subhas. As long as he was not convicted, he chalked out plans for work and on the 9th January, 1930, in a meeting at Hazra Park presided over by himself, Subhas reminded the people of the Independence Resolution and exhorted them to see that economic

independence could be secured by working through villages. As the first president of the *Trade Union Congress* he appealed to members to close up ranks and present a united front.

Let us take our leave now from the heated political atmosphere and resort for some time to the secluded cell of Subhas at the Central Jail where he had to stay a few months.

He was again in a serene atmosphere, mixing with friends, doing service to workers, thinking, reading and spending time in meditation in a secluded corner conveniently partitioned by him in his cell with a parda (sheet), where he used often to pray.

It was at this time besides his 11 friends, Messrs. Satya Bakshi, Prof. Nripen Banerjee, Mr. Jnananjan Neogi (all sentenced for sedition, the first as editor of the *Banglar Katha* and the other two for having delivered speeches on the Deshbandu-Day on June 16, 1929), and the Civil Disobedience Prisoners of 1930 also mustered strong and the jail was full at the time. Besides Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta was also there for having read proscribed literature. The jail was then full echoing with songs of *Bandemataram* and *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jay*, whose heroic *Dundee March* from March 12, 1930 on has been a matter of glorious history of India. A number of lady prisoners was also then in

the Central Jail. I shall relate here how an incident of an unfortunate nature happened in the jail and as to how a number of injuries was inflicted on Subhas.

The leaders were living in wards I & II and Anglo Indian prisoners in ward III, and ward No. IV which was called Bomb Yard was occupied by Messrs. Niranjana Sengupta, Satish Chandra Pakrasi, Mukul Ranjan Sengupta, Jagadish Chatterjee, Ramen Biswas and others. They were undergoing trial at the Alipore Special Tribunal with Judge Sankey as President and I was defending some of these gentlemen. On the 22nd April, 1930, we were all waiting for the prisoners who were unusually late. They came at about 12 and Mr. Pakrasi was relating the story while crying in pain how they were all assaulted and Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta and Subhas too were severely beaten and dragged by force to their respective cells. The Tribunal recorded the statements of Messrs. Sen, Pakrasi and Ramen Biswas all with bleeding injuries and adjourned the court for some days.

The statements of these under-trial prisoners which have been lately verified by about hundred statements run as follows : "Superintendent Major Som Dutt hitherto all right now began to ill-treat C. D. Prisoners at the Hajat ward who informed the Mechuabazar Bomb case prisoners and the treatment affected

their psychology'. Sardar Balwant and Premsing (Sikhs) were also ill-treated by Pathan sentries. When the tension was high, Balwant and Prem walking were one day forced inside the wall by some Pathans—the latter on the other hand complained that stones were thrown at them. Som Dutt came in a rage, and without enquiry as to the truth ordered 'alarm bell' to be rung at 9 A. M. The Anglo Indian prisoners were let off and Nisha Kanta of Machuabazar group was pushed. He protested and next a free fight took place for about 15 minutes between them, and sentries and Anglo Indian prisoners combined. All C. D. prisoners in sympathy were crying 'Bande-mataram' and Som Dutt threatened those of Subhas's ward that he was going there too. Head Jamadar Jamnna Sing was ordered to fire but he refused unless a written order was given him. The whole party then went to Subhas's ward and pushed those present by force to their respective cells. Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta received injuries and Subhas was so much assaulted that he fell down unconscious. He was not even given any medical aid until Dr. J. M. Das Gupta took special permission to come to Subhas and give him first aid. It ran abroad that both Sen Gupta and Subhas were no more, when thousands collected outside the gate. A committee of enquiry was ordered and as a result Som Dutt had to go.

Sometime after, Subhas finding the treatment to the political sufferers far behind the mark, wrote a number of letters to the Government, but as no heed was paid of the complaints, Subhas, S. J. Kiran Sankar, Purna Das and others resorted to hunger-strike from July 25, 1930, as a result of which he was confined to bed and got fever. Eventually they broke fast and some grievances were partially removed.

On Sept. 25, 1930, both Messrs. Sen Gupta and Subhas were released from jail and there is nothing to mention except that he was busy with Corporation matters and tried to set things aright. As election of Mr. Sen Gupta who had been elected in April, lapsed owing to his failure to take oath within six months from election, Subhas stood in the election as candidate for the Mayoral chair and was returned.

Contemporary with Subhas, Babu Benimadhab Das, a leading pleader, Gaibandha, (Rangpur) and president of the local Congress committee was then lodged for some months in the Central Jail. At Subhas's suggestion I had to go to Gaibandha and Rangpur to defend Beni Babu's son Brojomadhab and others who were then undergoing trial for picketing liquor shops. For the same reason I also

took up the defence of 'Sarishabari Bomb Conspiracy Case' and 'Dalhousie Square Bomb Conspiracy Case'. He had given special instructions to the law-assistant to engage me in the political cases as far as possible. No sooner was Beni Babu released than he saw me at my residence with Subhas's message. He spoke too highly as to how Subhas passed his days at the jail, enquiring of and looking after others' comforts. It also struck me how anxious he was for the defence of workers as our master Deshbandhu had been for defence of Mr. Pratap Guha Roy (now M. L. A.) and others.

That Subhas was not forgetful of constructive side of *Swadeshi* and *Boycott* will be clear from the fact that in December, 1930, he started the 'Bengal Swadeshi League' with a view to co-ordinating the activities of business men, industrialists, economists and national workers for the purchase of Swadeshi goods in India, especially in Bengal some bulletins were prepared on research and the one by Dr. Harish Sinha regarding the distribution of India's foreign trade and containing other statistics is a very valuable contribution.

In January, 1931, he attended the Political Prisoners' Conference at Berhampore where he delivered a magnificent speech.

From Berhampore he was invited to visit many places, but went to Jiaganj only, travelling in a third class compartment, and addressed a huge meeting. Kiron Das accompanied him.

Thence he went to Maldha, although dissuaded by local Congressmen from visiting the place. At Amnura he was served with an order under Sec. 144 Cr. P. C. asking him not to enter Maldha district. He paid no heed to it and disobeyed the order. When he reached Maldha station he was put under arrest, tried and sentenced to seven days' simple imprisonment. He was sent to Central Jail, Alipore, and took seven days' rest there.

Then came the second Independence day and as he had been absent on the first occasion, he tried to celebrate it in a manner befitting the Corporation Mayor. In the afternoon accompanied by the Education Officer Mr. K. P. Chatterjee, Captain Naren Datta, Mr. Sailen Ghosal and others Subhas led a procession from the Corporation compound to the Ochterlony Monument. A procession of ladies was also moving that way with Sja. Jyotirmoyee Gangulee and others.

It was at this time that processions and meetings (prohibited during the Civil Disobedience Movement) were still under ban, but he cared not. In the morning a senior police officer Mr. Pulin Chatterjee (now a

Deputy Commissioner) saw Subhas and conveyed to him a request from the Police Commissioner not to lead the procession, to which his reply was—"Tell your boss that I will break the law." When the procession crossed the Chowringhee Road, Messrs. Robertson and B. N. Banerjee of the Calcutta Police stood in the way. Subhas was then bare-footed, probably in mourning and sergeants and constables snatched the flags with force. In the course of the tussle, he received five injuries—concussions on the forehead and back of head, fore-arm and a number of scratches. He was taken to the Lalbazar lock-up and had to remain there till the court time of the following day without food, bath and change of clothes. Mr. Roxburgh (Now Mr. Justice) was the Chief Presidency Magistrate. On the latter's asking about the plea, Subhas said—

"As a non-co-operator I refuse to plead and take part in the proceedings, but about treatment to prisoners, I first draw your attention thus—Treatment at the Lalbazar lock-up is a disgrace. Nothing, not even medical aid is allowed to prisoners. If you visit the place you will see what a hell it is."

Magistrate—"Put your statement in a petition."

"Subhas—"I can't write, as my arm is injured (the arm was in a bandaged condition).

Magistrate—"I will note it."

Magistrate sentenced Subhas to six months' R. I. against which he preferred no appeal. He was however, released soon after, along with the Civil Disobedience Prisoners.

After the Civil Disobedience of 1930 terminated successfully, a Pact known as 'Gandhi-Irwin Agreement' was entered into between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin and it came up for consideration at the next session of the Congress held at Karachi on the last week of March, 1931, under the presidency of Sardar Ballavbhai Patel. Subhas was against the Pact which he considered very harmful to the best interests of the country. He went to Karachi and on the way halted at Lahore, where he recounted the heroic deeds of the Panjabis who can bring life to dead bodies and bring to book culprits and paid regards to the ashes of Bhagat Sing, Sukdev and Rajguru (sentenced to death) which had been brought to Lahore. He received great honour while two days ago other leaders had not. At some station near Karachi both Mahatma and Sardarji were received with black flags by some persons. Mahatmaji accepted these in good sport and those who came to scoff, began to pray.

The Gandhi-Irwin-Pact was no doubt ratified in the Congress Session but Subhas did not see eye to

eye with the leaders. In the Socialistic Conference held on March 27, 1931 at Karachi he wanted full economic freedom and wanted to organise peasants on Socialistic bases all the while bitterly criticising the Pact there.

It was at this time controversies between the two wings of the B.P.C.C. ran high. Besides as the time of election of the B. P. C. C. was near at hand, Subhas wanted to proceed. The other side wanted to postpone it and refer the matter to arbitration by W. C. Mahatmaji also wrote to both the parties for a compromise. Subhas and Sen Gupta met, but no settlement was arrived at. Subhas's contention was that it was Sen Gupta who raised the standard of revolt. For running municipal election in 1931, rival B. P. C. C. was formed under the name of Provincial Congress Sangha consisting of Presidents and Secretaries of Calcutta District Congress Committees. They also formed a rival Municipal Association. The contention of the other side was that Subhas rebelled against the A. I. C. C. and conduct of his followers at the meetings did not show adherence to non-violence. Babu Hardyal Nag considered those in possession of B. P. C. C. as rebels. In a meeting held at Howrah on June 3, 1931, Mr. Hemanta Bose complained that as the executive council of the B. P. C. C. during the last Civil Disobedience movement remained silent and that

necessitated the formation of 'Bengal Council of Action' which made the movement successful at Contai and Mahishabathan. The meeting however ended in chaos when chairs were even hurled.

On another side when Mr. Sen Gupta proceeded to Mymensing to preside at a conference, some persons did not shrink to show vandalism by even assaulting him, an affair for which Subhas was not certainly responsible but yet a vote of no confidence was passed on him by the Tipperah students.

It is of no use enumerating the unpleasant events of a like nature which reflect no credit to us but whatever unpleasantness happened owing to the rivalry of the two conflicting groups, it was the earnest desire of Subhas to see work going on smoothly. The Working Committee next thought it justified to authorise Mr. Aney to be the sole arbitrator and asked him to proceed to Bengal without delay. Mr. Aney came in September when Subhas had resigned his place as an Alderman of the Calcutta Corporation and Presidentship of the B. P. C. C. as protest against unjustifiable firing at Hijli, as also for the reason that better feelings may be restored by his resignation although the responsibility of the unpleasantness was attributed to the oppositionists in his statements. He felt that he was in the right and

made all attempts to proceed constitutionally. It was about this time three incidents convulsed Bengal very much.

The first was the reign of terror that prevailed in Chittagong after Inspector Asanulla was shot dead by an unknown person.

The second was the firing at Hijli detention camp which was responsible for killing Santosh Mitra and Tarakeswar Sen and causing injuries on twenty more Political Prisoners. There was some tussle between some detenus and sentries on the 16th September, 1931, which culminated in the tragic happenings at 9 P.M. Dead bodies of Santosh and Tarakeswar were brought to Calcutta and the funeral procession was attended by not less than a lac of men and in the meeting attended by Messrs. Aney and Sen Gupta, Subhas asked the audience to cast individuality and merge right unto the field of action. Both Messrs. Sen Gupta and Subhas had hastened to Hijli and demanded a public enquiry which was eventually ordered by the Government. Mr. Justice S. C. Mullick, I. C. S. and Mr. Drumond formed the commission. From Calcutta Messrs. B. C. Chatterjee, S. C. Roy, J. C. Gupta and N. R. Das Gupta appeared as Counsels on behalf of the public. The Commissioners reported that firing was not justifiable. Both Messrs.

Sen Gupta and Subhas used to live at Hijli together during enquiry and took a good deal of interest.

There was another incident in which the unjustifiable indignity Subhas was subjected to, I shall be able to narrate from my personal experience. On October 28, Mr. Durno, I. C. S., the District Magistrate of Dacca was shot dead on the Johnson Road, near the Courts and a state of affairs similar to that at Chittagong followed. Persons were assaulted, indiscriminate searches resulting in the losses of valuables were made and innocent persons were awakened at dead of night and put under arrest. It appeared as if all personal rights about life and property of citizens of Dacca were at an end. A public meeting was held at the Albert Hall, Calcutta in protest on Nov. 5 and amongst others Messrs. Subhas Bose, J. C. Gupta, myself were selected as persons to hold enquiry at Dacca. Subhas, Mr. Gupta and myself left Sealdah on the following evening, reaching Narayangunge at about 1 P. M., 7th November, 1931. As soon as the steamer anchored, two Europeans (one Mr. Ellison, Additional Supdt. of Police, Dacca and the other the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Narayangunge came to the flat. They next said to Subhas, "You can't land here. Better go back by the steamer which is awaiting", while Subhas, as was natural, stoutly refused to do the same.

Subhas came to the land, wanted to proceed to his destination but was taken to the thana and the S. P. said, "I am not arresting you, but you are under virtual restraint."

In the course of the conversation at the thana, which from one side was the request to leave, followed by the refusal of the otherside, Mr. Ellison was found taking an indulgence of addressing him as Subhas. On its repetition came the following words from Subhas "Mr. Ellison, as I am addressing you, you should also address me 'Subhas Babu' or 'Mr. Bose' and not 'Subhas'. Ellison tried to excuse himself, but at last had to yield.

After all the persuasion of Ellison failed, he took Subhas to a steamer and in the next station at Kamalaghat, coming to the banks quickly with the help of one plank only, removed it instantly making Subhas's alighting impossible. Subhas with his personal rights thus interfered with, had to remain in the steamer till he was made to get down at Chandpur. After Subhas had left Narayangunge, Mr. Gupta and myself came to Dacca and from the next day we began our enquiries co-opting a Mohamadan member of the Dacca Bar as our colleague. We were struck with awe at the inhuman harassment of the innocent citizens of the town.

Subhas was not the man to stop. He did not go back to Calcutta before all means was exhausted. Staying there a day or two, he came by the other way (Assam Bengal Railway) and reached Tejgaon on the 11th Nov. He was taken direct to the Station Master's quarters and arrested there by the order of the S. D. O. who was there, for alleged disobedience to Magistrate's order under Section 144 C. P. C. which had been passed meantime. The Section is a bailable one, but the Magistrate attached a condition, that bail could be given if he agreed not to enter Dacca, which he did not accept. As the Magistrate's order was an illegal one, Mr. Gupta with the help of Dacca lawyers moved an appeal before the Sessions-Judge and got it cancelled. Subhas was unconditionally released on the 14th Nov. and although his case was fixed for hearing on the 23rd, the case was however withdrawn on the 20th Nov., 1931.

It was about this time some European officers were shot at different places of Bengal and an Ordinance known as the *Bengal Ordinance* was passed on Oct. 29, conferring special powers on certain Magistrates to suppress the terrorist movement by trial without jury, imposition of collective fines and internments. It was styled by experts as "Lawless law" and Subhas made impassioned speeches at different places of the province against the promulgation of it. I was also

with him in some of the meetings. The next important thing was the Bengal Provincial Conference at Berhampore, presided over by Sj. Hardyal Nag and attended amongst others by Messrs. Aney, Rajendra Prasad, Nariman. In the Subjects Committee I saw Subhas sitting, but he scarcely uttered a word. He then attended the 'Maharashtra Youth Conference' at Poona on Dec. 23, where he appealed to all to close up ranks in the struggle for freedom. His last act during that session was his attendance at the Working Committee of the Congress at Bombay. Mahatmaji had already arrived from London on Dec. 27 and Pandit Jawaharlal had already been arrested and in this committee too Civil Disobedience and Boycott of British goods and British concerns were adopted. Then followed persecutions and arrests. Congress Working Committee was declared illegal, and amongst others Mahatmaji and Sardar Patel were lodged in Yarveda Jail. Subhas too was arrested on June, 2, on his way to Calcutta, 30 miles from Bombay, as soon as the train came to the Kalyan station. He was taken by Calcutta Mail to an unknown destination.

FIFTH CHAPTER

As President of the Congress

After Subhas was arrested he was taken to the Seoni Sub-Jail in the Central Provinces where he stayed for some months. After that he was taken to Jubbulpore Central Jail. As his health failed he was taken to Bhawali Sanatorium and afterwards was brought to the Balarampur Hospital, Lucknow. His health completely shattered and the Government at last agreed to allow him to go to Europe for the purpose of recovering his health. He was not however permitted to see his parents before he left India. He started on Feb. 23, 1933 and sent the following message from the ship to his countrymen :

"If Bengal dies, who will live ? If Bengal lives, who will die ?"

Subhas reached Vienna on March 8, 1933 and stayed at the Firth Sanitorium. It was here he met the ex-President of the Central Council, India, Sardar Vithalbhai Patel, who had been one of the staunchest supporters of the programme of Deshbandhu Das in 1922-24.

Patel was a great patriot and had gone to Europe to recoup his health. After a few months when he

felt better, he undertook a long tour to America with a view to advocate the cause of India's freedom. In course of a hurricane tour of three months he addressed not less than 80 meetings in America. The strain was too much for his weak health to bear and by the time he reached Europe he was in a state of collapse. During this critical period, Subhas was by his side day and night serving like a son and friend and as both were imbued with patriotism and a burning desire for their country's freedom, Subhas too got a friend, guide and philosopher abroad in Sardar Patel.

When Mahatma Gandhi stayed indefinitely the programme of Satyagraha in 1933, a few months after he had been released from the Yarveda Jail, both Sardar Patel and Subhas Chandra issued a joint statement on May 9, 1933, in the following words :

"The latest action of Mr. Gandhi in suspending Civil Disobedience is a confession of failure. We are clearly of the opinion that Mr. Gandhi as a political leader failed. The time has therefore come for a political re-orientation of the Congress on a new principle ; as it is unfair to expect Mr. Gandhi to work the programme not consistent with his life-long principles."

Sardar Patel did not however live long. In his

will he had set apart Rs. one lac for "Foreign Propaganda" and made Subhas one of the trustees. It was desired that the money for the purpose would be spent according to his desire. Of him Subhas himself said :

"Only when he showed his *will* in which among other things he called upon me to give effect to his ideas—did I realise his affection and confidence in me. I can not tell how greatly I was moved by such affection and confidence."

While in Europe Subhas wrote a book on the Indian movement called "The Indian Struggle", from 1920 to 1934. This book did not favour the slow-moving policy of Gandhiji and hinted at New Leadership. I have no authority to quote any passages from the book as it is banned in India, but in conversation with Mon. Romain Rolland, whom he met at a *later period* in Geneva (Switzerland) on April 3, 1935, reported in Modern Review (Sept., 1935, page 319), the idea of new leadership comes prominently when they talked on Gandhi. Subhas asked :

"What would be your view if the united front is broken up and a new movement is started not quite in keeping with the requirements of Gandhian Satyagraha ?"

Romain—I would be very sorry and disappointed if Gandhian Satyagraha failed to win freedom for India.

... Great were the hopes that Gandhi had roused throughout the whole world.

Subhas—We find from experience that Gandhiji's method is too lofty for this materialistic world and, as a political leader he is too straightforward in his dealings with his opponents. We find, further, though the British are not wanted here, with the help of superior physical force, have nevertheless been able to maintain their existence in India inspite of the inconvenience and annoyance caused by the Satyagraha movements. If Satyagraha ultimately fails, would you not like to see the national endeavour continued by other methods or would you cease taking interest in the Indian movement ?

Romain—Well, the struggle must go on in any case.

Subhas said that was the answer nearest to his heart. The above conversation showed the trend of Subhas's mind. He thought Gandhian programme of Satyagraha was used up and that other methods though not in keeping with *Gandhian Satyagraha* should be taken up.

In 1934 his father Sj. Janakinath Basu fell ill and died on Dec. 2. On receiving a cable from mother that his father's condition was serious, he flew to India and reached Karachi Aerodrome on Dec., 3. Here he received the news of his father's death from Sj. Jamshed

Mehta. His belongings were however searched by Police and Customs and the typed pages of his "Indian Struggle" taken away.

From Karachi again Subhas flew to Calcutta. No sooner had he reached Dumdum than he was served with an order of arrest under Regulation III of 1818 and was asked peremptorily to go to his house at Elgin Road and remain home-interned where he was not to correspond, converse, or associate with anybody except the members of his family. He remained in this state a month in his house till the Sradh ceremony was performed. During the time, we had the opportunity of seeing him and his second brother Mr. Sarat Bose, performing '*Dans*'—obsequies. Speechless he was all attention to his friends. Oh ! how beautiful was his smile at that time !

After a month he again left for Europe on Jan. 8, 1935 and reached Vienna and revived the system of treatment he had already been undergoing.

He now finished his "*Indian Struggle*" and got it printed. The book had a very large circulation in Europe but in India it was banned. This book was very highly spoken of by several erudite scholars and noted persons of Europe.

In Europe he was practically in a state of externment. He was not permitted to go to England, Russia

or America. He had been asked to preside at the National Conference in London called by Indian People's Association of London but was not allowed to attend. His written speech was read there, but it was banned in India. He considered, in the speech, the surrender of 1933 by Mahatma Gandhi a calamity of the first magnitude.

When he was at Vienna to restore health, Dr. Daniel performed an operation on his person and after that he began to regain health. He was also attempting to write a history on the Indian National Movement, but the book could not be finished.

He took part in the Convention of the students of Asia held at Rome in Dec. 1935. The conference was opened by Signor Mussolini. In the third convention of the Indian students too Mussolini occupied the chair.

In Feb., 1936 he went to Ireland. He always felt great admiration for the Irish struggle for freedom under De Valera whom he met and was received by him cordially.

The Golden Jubilee session of the Indian National Congress was held this year at Lucknow under the Presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in April, 1936. With a desire to join the Congress he started for home and as soon as he reached Bombay on April 8, in the

"Contivard" ship he was again arrested under Regulation III of 1818 and taken to Arthur Road Outpost, wherefrom he was removed to Yarveda Jail. He was removed again to Kurseong on May 20, 1936 and was ordered to be interned at the house of his brother Mr. S. C. Basu on the Girda Hill. He was brought to Calcutta by the Darjeeling Mail on Dec. 17, 1936 and kept at the Medical College Hospital at Calcutta.

India expressed universal discontent at his continued incarceration by observing a Hartal on May 10, 1936.

He was no doubt not allowed to attend the Congress, but his message was "Keep the Flag of Freedom aloft". Pandit Jawaharlal as President sent a letter of sympathy to him.

After five years' suffering he was unconditionally released on March 17, 1937. He stayed at Calcutta for a month and was under the treatment of Dr. Sir Nilratan Sirkar.

On April 25, 1937 he started for Dalhousie, a hill station of the Punjab for a change and after five months returned to Calcutta on Oct. 7 to his house.

At Dalhousie he stayed at the house of Dr. Dharambeer and recovered his health to a good extent. But Dr. Dharambeer who treated him at Dalhousie advised him to rest for a further period, as

otherwise it would be difficult for him to be completely restored to health. On coming to Calcutta he left for Kurseong and stayed there for a fortnight till the time when All India Congress Committee met at Wellington Square. He came on the 24th October, 1937, to look to the arrangements which had been made by the B.P.C.C.

Mahatmaji at this time stayed at the house of Mr. Sarat Ch. Bose at 1, Woodburn Park for about two weeks. Subhas had the opportunity of discussing matters and exchanging views. It appears Subhas was fully convinced of the effectiveness of Non-violence and Non-co-operation as a weapon.

It was at the meeting of the Working Committee "Bandematoram" as the national song was mutilated under the presidency of Pandit Jawahar and in the immediate presence of Mahatma Gandhi at No. 1, Woodburn Park and it is a great pity that neither Subhas Chandra nor his brother, both of whom were members of the Working Committee, were heard to have raised any protest. Pandit Jawahar was reported to have obtained Rabindranath's approval of the mutilation (i.e. omission of the last two verses). The ground for cutting off the song as suggested, was to prevent any feeling of opposition from other communities who might take exception to the idea of image-worship apparently contained in the song.

I do not question the motive of our leaders, but it is a pity that the song was thoroughly misunderstood. The whole song depicts *Matribhumi* (motherland) in all features, what it shall be and what culture and wealth, might and unity it will inspire. Members of the committee should have been advised to consult erudites and specialists in Sahitya Samrat Bankim's literature of the class of Pandit Promotho Nath Tarkabhusan or Hirendra Nath Dutt. Any Bengali of real culture—be he a Hindu or Mahomedan knows what all-embracing idea it inspires and my esteemed friend Moulvi Rezaul Karim has like a true scholar analysed the significance of the song of Rishi Bankim in its true colours. Any person or community might object to the use of the word 'National Congress' or 'Independence' but that will be no ground to change these appellations. We should request our countrymen to understand the song as it is.

I know however of a meeting of litterateurs held at Hindusthan Park in which Subhas was invited to listen to the grievances for mutilation and he expressed that public opinion should be gathered in favour of the full song.

It was in the above working committee, disciplinary measures were taken against a leading Congressman—Mr. K. F. Nariman of Bombay. The

findings of fact as published in papers could not satisfy a large number of persons and the matter should have come before a higher body.

After the A. I. C. C. meeting was over Subhas gave advice to the Bengali workers in the Pandal including Messrs. Kiran Sankar Ray, Sailajananda Sen and others. I did not notice then much enthusiasm in the workers.

It was however almost settled though informally that Subhas would be the President-elect of the Fifty First Session at Haripura in 1938.

After the committee's business was over, Subhas again flew to Europe on Nov. 18, 1937 and stayed there for six weeks at Badgastein in Austria where he received another set of treatment. He was given a reception in Prague by the Indo-Czechoslovak Society of which Prof. Lorney and Miss Herlukora were the President and the Secretary respectively.

He left the place on Jan. 8 and reached England on Jan. 10, 1938. In the meantime he was declared President-Elect of the session. There was no opposition from any source, as none stood as a candidate. His age then was only 41.

He came to England and put up at 112, Gower Street, London, W. C. 1 as guest of the Indian Students' Union, Ceylon Students' Association, The

London Maffis, and the Federation of Indian Students' Societies, Great Britain and Ireland. After an address was given by Mr. K. L. Harava, editor of the "Student" and President of the "Indian Students' Union", he delivered a very feeling and enthusiastic extempore reply.

The ideas he uttered before his countrymen, mostly students in that foreign land, came from the bottom of his heart. I have always valued this as one of the best and I reproduce portion of it in his own words—

"It gives me great pleasure that I am now in the midst of Indian and Ceylonese students. As you are my own countrymen I shall talk to you in the most familiar way and give you some of my jail experiences today. Many of you aspire to be writers and authors and this will be of help to you. Indeed similar experiences of jail life act as a piece of good art.

"In 1921-22 when I was at the Presidency Jail along with many of the volunteers, a China man (an ordinary prisoner) who was passing by was simply puzzled to see so many respectable youngmen within the prison-bars. Day to-day he saw those and felt amazed. In his broken English one day he asked one of us with signs—opium ? opium ?

The Congress-worker nodded—No.

Chinaman—Cocaine ? Cocaine ?

"No"—was the reply.

Then he kept silent for some time and then took courage to ask one more question—

“Gandhi ? Gandhi ?”

Congress-man nodded this time—“Yes.”

Well, friends, even prison life has its higher aspects. It gives wonderful opportunity to study human Psychology.”

Deshbandhu and a Criminal

You must have heard of C. R. Das who was a man with wide sympathies. He once told a criminal “when you go out, live with me”. The man went to C. R. Das and lived for several months. We thought he was completely reformed but when C. R. went to Darjeeling, the criminal was awakened to his old instinct. The instinct came back and he ran away with some silver. But he was generous. He used to distribute all he stole.

If you ever face prison life, I am sure you will emerge, from such experience, a better man and a bigger personality. The next time I had been in the Mandalay Jail, it was a satisfaction to me that there lived for some time Lokmanya Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai.

Friends, our ideal of Complete Independence was not reached in a day. Sree Arambinda in 1906 talked of it first. But it took years for us to be permeated with the spirit of complete independence. It was only in 1929, under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, Congress adopted the resolution.

Don't shrink from battle

British domination of India was due to an understanding between foreigners and landlords and capitalists. So they

have to be done away with. Your duty is only to rally the masses and never shrink from it.

Method

The genius of **Mahatma Gandhi** lays in the weapon that he found out for Indian freedom. I mean the method of **non-violent non-co-operation**. He has demonstrated it as the most potent and effective weapon.

Mass consciousness

The most hopeful feature of the Indian situation is mass consciousness. Follow those leaders who express the will of the masses.

Your country expects much of you. You have Great Britain before you, but you have to study international problems also.

Service

Do not hanker after service. While I was in Cambridge in 1919, **Lokamanya Tilak** came there once. He asked us to prepare ourselves for national service and not to accept jobs under foreign rulers.

An English professor told me that majority of Indian students do not care for national service. This is a shameful state of things. I hope it will not be repeated.

Friends, I must conclude my speech. Congress is fighting for freedom. But you have also your part to play. You have to inform outside world the real facts of Indian situation, I do not believe in *propaganda* in the narrow sense of the term, but you shall be Indians in words and deeds and keep your ideal always aloft and hold aloft the honour and self-respect of the Indian people.

In England he had to pass the busiest days in addressing public meetings, meeting Indians in private conference and giving advice to youngmen. He was also given a public reception by the Labour leaders, who are now at the fore-front of world politics. Mr. Atlee, the Prime Minister, then president of the Labour Party, Mr. Bevin, then the leader of the Trade Unionists, Sir Stafford Cripps, the leader of the Socialists and Mr. Harry Pollit, the leader of the Communists—all met him at the public meeting at the Conway Hall when Mr. Arthur Greenwood, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, gave his outstanding speech—

“We give you the warm welcome not only as the first President of the Trade Union Congress, but also as one to whom are coming now the very great responsibilities.

“I greet you not only as the Great Indian Leader and I do so in the name of the Labour movement. I am a very typical Englishman and I am not ashamed of it. But I have always tried to be a good internationalist and I had learnt much from those who belong to other nations and other races.”

After that Subhas left for Home. He reached Karachi through air on January 23 and was very enthusiastically received by all sections of people

including the President of the Congress Committee. The meeting he addressed was so to say a miniature congress. He was curiously asked by some one whether or not he was thinking of entering into matrimony to which his reply was—

“I have no time to think of that”.

Then he flew from Karachi and reached Dumdum Aerodrome on Jan. 24, 1938 and was received cordially by a number of his friends and countrymen including his Dalhousie hostess Mrs. Dharambeer. With a smiling face, looking bright, wearing a Gandhi cap and deep brown over-coat, he looked quite hale and hearty and his friends' joy knew no bounds to see him restored to health.

He came to his house and had a hearty conversation with friends who assembled there. In course of it he said—

“The Bengal Government is very kind to me. Some one from Bengal had published news in the Daily Telegraph to the effect that my *propaganda* in England has been totally ignored by the Bengal Government.”

Some one asked—“Is there any probability of a European War?”

Bose—It looks less probable now than it did ten years ago.

Another—We heard about your Autobiography.

Subhas—Yes, a substantial part has been ready and handed over to Publishers. The remaining part would be here if I would find time.

The renowned novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee breathed his last just a few days before on Jan. 15, 1938 and on his arrival, a meeting was called on Jan. 27, at the Ashutosh College and Subhas gladly agreed to preside. His reminiscences were very touching. In the meeting a Committee with Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore as President was formed, to devise ways and means to perpetuate Sarat Chandra's memory. He felt gratified to see my name, too, included in the Committee. He then left for the Provincial Conference at Vishnupore which was to be held on Jan. 29. On the 31st January, the Executive Council of the B.P.C.C. was re-organised with himself as President.

The Working Committee of the Congress met at Sheogaon (Wardah) on Feb. 3, 1938. Subhas consulted Mahatmaji about the address he would deliver at Haripura and sought his opinion. He came back to Calcutta, which he left again on 11th Feb. He had by this time prepared his final address and showed that to Mahatma.

He was accompanied by friends and came by the Nagpur Mail up to Dadar and then left for Haripura by

Kathiwar Express. Ladies gave *titak* mark on his fore-head and gave blessings. He was here taken in a very big procession from Haripura to Vithalnagar—2½ miles from the place in a chariot drawn by 51 bullocks and followed by six other bullock carts.

He was very much touched by the procession and gave the following message—

“Half a century of eventful existence and a little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ crore members—that is the record of Indian National Congress. Vithalnagore is found to be a land mark of the National struggle for Independence. I appeal to youth, peasants, manual labourers, the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Christians and the Sikhs—in fact every Indian—to live up with the forces marching towards the goal of Freedom and Swaraj. Those who do not decide now, shall decide never. Those who do not work for freedom, cannot deserve it.”

Mrs. Sorojini Naidu for whom Subhas had high regards greeted him in the following way—

“We offer our allegiance to the youth the disciplined youth, dedicated to the service of the motherland in the fight for freedom. In your name and on your behalf I welcome Mr. Subhas Bose our new leader and in bidding farewell to Pandit

Jawaharlal Nehru we offer to him also our heart-felt gratitude by assuring him of our help in the realisation of his great ideals.

Subhas's presidential speech which was delivered in the midst of pin-drop silence is a document which showed full of life and animation. He exhorted the youth and students and stressed on the importance of raising an All India Volunteer Corps. He stressed on the "Fundamental Rights about which a resolution had been passed by the A. I. C. C. at Calcutta in October, 1937. He said that as Congress assured rights of individuals, there was safety to every Indian to Join Congress and work for it and with regard to the Government of India Act of 1935, he divided it into two parts, the Provincial and the Federal. With regard to the administration carried on by Congress Ministers, it could be called successful and they would resign any time they were required by Congress if any essential differences arise with the Governors, but as to Federal Scheme, he re-iterated the Congress view point in the following speech, concluding with a well-deserved *panegyric* on Mahatma Gandhi—

Subhas's speech at Haripura, 19th Feb., '38.

The Congress attitude towards the proposed Federal Scheme has been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Wardah on February 4, 1938,

which will be placed before this Congress after the Subjects Committee has considered it. That resolution says :—

“The Congress has rejected the new constitution and declared that a constitution for India which can be accepted by the people must be based on Independence and can only be framed by the people themselves by means of constituent assembly without the interference of any foreign authority. Adhering to this principle of rejection, the Congress has, however, permitted the formation in provinces of Congress Ministries with a view to strengthening the nation in its struggle for independence. In regard to the proposed federation, no such consideration now applies provisionally or for a period and the imposition of this Federation will do grave injuries to India and tighten the bonds which hold her under the subjection of an imperialist domination. This scheme of Federation excludes from the sphere of responsibility the vital function of a Government.”

“The Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation but a real Federation must even apart from the question of responsibility consists of free units, enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by a democratic process of election. Indian states participating in Federation should approximate to the provinces in the establishment of representative institution, responsible Government, Civil liberties and the method of election to the Federal House. Otherwise Federation as it is now contemplated will, instead of building Indian Unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the states in internal and external conflict.

"The Congress therefore re-iterates its condemnation of the proposed scheme and calls upon Provincial and Local Congress Committees and the people generally as well as Provincial Governments and Ministries to present its inauguration.

"In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way and the Provincial Governments and Ministries must refuse to co-operate with it.

"In case such a contingency arises, the A. I. C. C. is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard.

"Friends, one word more and I have done. We are faced with a serious situation today. Inside the Congress there are differences between the right and the left which it would be futile to ignore. Outside there is the challenge of British Imperialism which we are called upon to face. What shall we do in this crisis? Need I say that we have to stand four square against all the storms that may be set our path and be impervious to all the designs that our rulers may employ. **The Congress today is the one supreme organ of mass struggle.** It may have its right bloc and its left—but it is the common platform for all anti-imperial organisations striving for Indian emancipation. **Let us therefore rally the whole country under the banner of I. N. Congress.** I would appeal specially to the leftist groups in the country to pool all their strength and their resources for democratising the Congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In making this appeal I am greatly

encouraged by the attitude of the leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in keeping with that of the I. N. Congress.

In conclusion I shall voice your feelings by saying that all India fervently hopes and prays that **Mahatma Gandhi** may be spared to our nation for many, many years to come. India cannot afford to lose him and certainly not at this hour. We need him to keep our *people united*. We need him to keep our struggle free from bitterness and hatred. **We need him for the cause of Indian Independence. What is more we need him for the cause of Humanity.** Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism but against world Imperialism as well, of which the former is the key note. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. **India freed means humanity saved."**

Bande-Mataram,

Subhas, although the youngest president that ever sat on the chair as *Rastrapati* to deliberate the destinies of India, proved as successful as his predecessors. His decorum, his stature and above all his personality, all fitted him to be the head. But how could so prominent a *leftist* who had always been on the opposition in 1928, 1929, 1931 and while in Europe, protested against the suspension of *Satyagraha* by Mahatmaji and later in his "Indian Struggle" and during conversation with Romain Rolland advocated the coming of a new leader to the supersession of Gandhiji, could

now from the A. I. C. C. meeting of 1937 (Oct.) just be of one mind and principles as that of Mahatmaji, Jawaharlal and other *rightist* leaders? Was it the change in principle? If not, what it was? Some even hinted that he lowered his flag a little just to become the President. Others on the contrary held that once he was at the top, even with some sacrifice in principles, he would, by virtue of his position redouble the strength of the *leftists* and convert the country to his views. But all such comments were very unfair to him. He was now with Mahatma and his followers and with a clean mind. His sufferings, his meditation in solitude, his experience in Europe and the exchange of greetings at the enthusiastic meetings of Indian students and above all the regards paid to him by the leaders of the Labour Movement of England,—leaders who in future would rule over the destinies of the world,—taught him like a wise statesman to combine his idealism with realism and here again he proved to be the worthiest disciple of Deshbandhu Das whose idealism used to be kept always balanced by his realistic activities and the *New Programme* of Council Entry was the greatest instance in point. Could Subhas also proceed on with this matured principle, he would not lay himself open to the charge of creating a schism in the ranks of the Congress and could have done a lot even with the *Indian National Congress* at home.

Just after he returned from Haripura, Subhas came to the *Deshbandhu Balika Vidyalaya* where I have been the founder-Secretary. A reception was given by teachers, students and the Committee and he spent about four hours in great joy with us. His revered mother, sisters-in-law and nephews and nieces were with him. He spoke to the girls and ladies as the coming *Netaji* to his followers, as if he was exhorting them to come to the battle-field. He shed copious tears for Deshbandhu. Lastly he ate sumptuously on the occasion. The whole party was exceedingly pleased with the manners and discipline of the girls—the coming mothers of our Nation. Deshbandhu's daughter-in-law Sja. Sujata Devi was also present.

This was on the 27th March, 1938.

On a subsequent occasion also he came during a school-function and hoped that these girls and teachers would form the best working band he was in contemplation.

Throughout the year Subhas was president, Congress ministries were doing good work and Subhas proceeded on as the constitutional Head of the Congress. His advice to Dr. Khare on discipline and on obedience to the National Organisation when disciplinary measures were taken against the latter were worthy of his dignity and position and were thoroughly justified by the circumstances.

SIXTH CHAPTER

Tripuri and After

After Subhas acted as a successful and worthy president of the Indian National Congress throughout 1938, the leftist element was again awakened in him as idealism predominated and for the next two years the country seemed to be thrown into a vortex of party-spirit and cross arguments and wrangles. The occasion was the presidential election of the next session of the Congress in 1939 (March). No doubt the position is an elective one but since 1920 I have not known of any president having been chosen without the consent of Mahatma Gandhi and to be accurate, Subhas's own election for Haripura (1938) without any opposition was in reality by his sufferance. But this time (1939) Mahatmaji himself asked him not to stand or contest. Yet Subhas persisted in contesting in spite of the opposition of Mahatmaji and the members of the Working Committee. Now the question is, had Subhas any justification to do so, inspite of Mahatma's request and Pandit Jawaharlal's desire "that as there was deep international crisis which necessitated a determined and united front for India, and not to turn the organisation into one divided in itself" ? Our reply is in the

affirmative. Democracy demands that if a person of extraordinary powers wants to convert the country to his own views, he has every justification to continue the fight, inspite of wholesale opposition against him. There was thus nothing wrong in his attempting to become President for the second time as well, as Pandit Jawaharlal had been at Lucknow in 1936 and at Faijpur in 1937.

But who were the other candidates ? Moulana Azad and Dr. Pattavi Sitaramiya were the other candidates. The former withdrawing, Subhas had an easy walk over the second, as almost all the provinces except Gujrat, Behar and Andhra much voted by majority in his favour as they considered difference in the merits of the respective candidates. Subhas was returned on the 29th January, 1939 with votes over fifteen hundred as against the Doctor who got something over thirteen hundred votes.

But what was the issue on which the election was fought ? Subhas was furious over any question of compromise with the 'Federation' as contemplated by the Government of India Act of 1935. He got a hint from the speech of Lord Lothian at Poona where the latter was said to have said—

“All Congress Leaders did not agree with Pandit Nehru in their attitude on Federal Scheme.”

Subhas also doubted that S. J. Bhulabhai Desai when going to England was hobnobbing with the Parliamentary members of the Federal question—a suggestion made through press was however openly denied by Mr. Desai. As against that, which consisted in suggestion and doubt only, the Working Committee never deviated an inch from its resolution of February 4, 1938 and in reply to Lord Lothian's letter, Gandhiji held the Federal structure an impossibility. Besides, the Federation resolution was re-iterated in Tripuri Congress. From all these it would be unfair to the old leaders, if it is attributed to them that they were any way deviating from the original stand they had taken. As the issue did not create any difference in views, Pandit Jawahar wanted that without using Leftists and Rightists, Subhas should clearly state what policy he advocated both in respect of national and international affairs.

After Subhas was declared elected, Mahatmaji issued a statement on January 31, 1939 in which amongst other things he reviewed the position as follows :

“Subhas achieved a decisive victory over his opponent—Dr. P. S. I must confess that from the very beginning I was against his re-election for reasons I need not go into. I do not subscribe to his

facts or the arguments in his manifestoes. I think that his references to his colleagues were unjustified and unworthy."

"Nevertheless I am glad of his victory and since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. P. not to withdraw, the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stood. I rejoice in the defeat."

"Subhas instead of being President on the sufferance of those whom he calls Rightists is now President elected in contested election. This enables him to choose a *homogeneous cabinet* and enforce his programme without let or hindrance."

Three days after this, in the Bengal Provincial Conference at Jalpaiguri presided over by Mr. Sarat Bose and attended by Subhas, a resolution in the nature of an ultimatum to the Government was passed. Subhas's programme thus became perceptible to Mahatmaji. Our readers also remember how to Mon. Romain Rolland, Subhas hinted about a new leader and a new programme and thus when he triumphs in the election by defeating Gandhiji's candidate, and suggests a programme in supersession to Mahatma's, the latter cannot but take that as his defeat and when

he speaks of a homogeneous cabinet his followers could not but take that as an indication to allow Subhas to have a cabinet of his choice. Next when Subhas came to Mahatma soon after (Feb. 15) at Saigon, the latter made the same position clear to him. But Subhas waited till a meeting of the Working Committee was called on Feb. 22. His friends were anxious for the early formation of the Working Committee, but he could not even attend that meeting definitely for his illness and his medical advisers dissuaded him from doing so as that would be very dangerous to his life. If Subhas could come, probably an understanding might have been arrived at, but fates were against. In the meeting all the thirteen members of the Working Committee sent letters of resignation. All the twelve simply withdrew giving Subhas an opportunity of forming a homogeneous committee and promising no obstruction, but in the letter which Panditji separately addressed, amongst other reasons he made it clear that certain statements of Subhas pained and astonished him. Panditji argued that if his (Subhas's) statements and allegations were true, then the members were guilty of the activities mentioned and were therefore unworthy of guiding the destinies of the Congress. If however the allegations were not true then the best that could be done was to withdraw those unconditionally.

There was thus no Working Committee, but the

General Secretary Mr. Kripalani in answer to certain grievances of Subhas declared that before the meeting of the W. C. on Feb. 22, Subhas had stopped the meeting through wire, and although he resigned his membership of W. C. did not however resign the post of General Secretary and agreed to do office work. His grievance was that the resignations of others were accepted by letters, his one was endorsed through wire.

Subhas's illness continued and he could neither form the Cabinet nor did he withdraw the allegations. Then came the Tripuri Congress and Subhas in spite of his high fever and against medical advice started for Jubbulpore with his mother, nieces and nephews and was carried in an ambulance car from the station to the President's Camp. To the disappointment of hundreds and thousands present, there could be no procession of the President but a big procession of fifty-one elephants was arranged, on the first day of the session, a royal elephant carrying the portrait of Subhas, followed by 50 more carrying photos of the Presidents of all sessions.

Subhas's speech was short but besides paying tribute to the Wafdist delegation of Egypt led by Nahas Pasha present at the Congress session, stressing volunteer organisation and stiffening of resolution on Anti-Federation, he gave in

his address an ultimatum to the British to the effect that "we shall put our demand before the British Government and if it is not conceded within six months, we shall start mass Civil Disobedience."

Thus he said—"We should submit national demand to British Government in the form of an ultimatum and give a certain limit within which a reply is to be expected. If no reply is received within this period or if an unsatisfactory reply is received, we should resort to such actions as we possess in order to enforce our national demands. In that case we start mass Civil Disobedience and *Satyagraha*, and the British Government are not in a position to face a major conflict, like the All India *Satyagraha* for a long time."

The speech in English was read by Mr. Sarat Bose and its Hindi version was read by Acharya Narendra Deb. But the most sensational incident of the session was the much criticised "Panth Resolution" and all the tumult, debates, duels and parties that had accompanied and followed it.

In the Subjects Committee meeting Pandit Govinda Ballav Panth moved a resolution that "for the better feeling in the Congress, President is to form the committee according to the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi. It is to be noted that Mahatmaji was not present in the session but was at Rajkot in launching

civil disobedience and fasting there. Subhas had wired to him to come but the reply came in the same way 'you may defy doctors, but I cannot'.

The above resolution of the Pandit Panth tying the President who had been elected, independently on majority votes of the delegates, to the wishes of Mahatma who himself advised Subhas to have his own uniform committee, appears to be highly undemocratic and Mr. M. S. Aney rightly advised the house to postpone passing the resolution till after recovery of the President. But the views of those who sponsored the resolution were that as the election of the president indicated defeat of *Gandhian policy* and as the immediate programme of the President militates against the programme of Gandhi who as the modern *Rishi of Satyagraha* required the requisite atmosphere and complete discipline amongst civil resisters, they as adherents of the Gandhi policy wanted to test and measure strength if really they were to pursue it—as they had done so many years or give a decent burial to it and ask the country to follow the paths of a new leader who had been for the last few years preaching at intervals the change of Gandhism. Their further argument was that the President Subhas himself instead of ruling it out of order allowed it to be moved. The resolution was passed in the Subjects Committee by a bare majority but in the open house by an overwhelming one.

After the Tripuri session was over in the midst of great excitement and row, Subhas came to Jamadoba in the district of Manbhum and stayed with his brother Mr. Sudhir Bose and a long and continuous correspondence passed between Mahatma and himself. His article "My Strange Illness" as published in Modern Review of 1939, April, was an answer to 'the insinuations of people that his disease was a feint'. Many had often indulged in funny expressions that he could have made and unmade fevers. From the considered opinions of physicians like Sir Nilratan Sarkar and the Inspector General of Hospitals, Central Provinces as also the Civil Surgeon, Jubbulpore, there was no room for any baseless doubt as to his illness which was really of a serious type, the temperature rising high, accompanied by an attack of Bronco-Pneumonia, and it is no wonder that having regard to the majority of people who arrayed against him he had for some time doubt in mind "if his strange illness was not due to *Maron*, *Uchaton* and *Bashikaran* (vide the above letter) which really induced him to put a number of amulets in his person."

Subhas now called a meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Calcutta, on 29, 1939 as that is the body which is to approve of the Working Committee or disagree with it. Mahatmaji came to Calcutta and stayed at the house of Mr. Satis

Ch. Das Gupta at Sodepur. Subhas had some interviews with Mahatmaji in obedience to the Panth Resolution and with an earnestness to make up differences. But Mahatmaji unwilling to give him suggestions in view of the programme and principle which showed much difference in fundamentals gave his opinion in the following letter which he addressed—

“My dear Subhas,

You have asked me to give you in terms of Panth resolution names for Working Committee. As I have told you in my letters and my telegrams, I feel myself utterly incompetent to do so. Much has happened since Tripuri. Knowing your own views and knowing how most of members differ in fundamentals it seems to me if I gave you names, it would be an imposition on you. I had argued this position at length in my letters to you. Nothing that has happened during these three days of closest conversation between us has altered my view. Such being the case, you are free to choose your own committee. I have told you too, that you could discuss with members the possibility of mutual approach and that nothing would please me better than to know that you were able to come together. Into what has happened since I need not go. You and ex-members present will make the position clear before the A.I.C.C. Only it has been a matter of greatest grief to me that mutual settlement has not been possible. I hope however that whatever is done will be done with mutual good will.”

To be fair to all, Subhas wanted a composite body. Mahatmaji, however, insisted on a homogeneous body being formed by him in view of differences being material. If the Panth resolution was undemocratic, Mahatma does not pin down Subhas to it nor does he impose a Committee on him. Now the only course left to Subhas was to take the bold step in forming his own committee as he had taken at the time of elections. He should have formed the Committee immediately after resignations of members of the Working Committee on Feb. 22, but if he did not do before, now was the time for him to do that, and submit it to A. I. C. C. for confirmation with an appeal to the House. If A. I. C. C. after his appeal responded to him, the best thing would have been to commence work with the help of the Committee and shoulder the responsibility or if A. I. C. C. did not sanction, then to resign and fight the old leaders till the whole Congress was converted to his views. But to resign before putting it to A. I. C. C. was a step indicating a spirit of defeatism which was not expected of Subhas who had seen so much Deshbandhu having converted the whole country to his views within nine months. He should have immediately taken up the new leadership if he had the courage of conviction. But he too had sufficient excuses, his supporters were deserting him. Even the Socialists who had supported him before,

moved at Tripuri an amendment which displayed faith in Mahatma. Those who had voted for him during election now rallied round Mahatma against him. It was demonstrated, people had still deep faith in Gandhism and time for changing leadership had not yet been ripe. But the demeanour and the spirit of self-abnegation, honour with which he resigned showed again the *mettle Subhas was made of*. It reminded me of Mr. Sasmal's resignation from the chair of the President, Bengal Provincial Conference and in a great measure to me the historic trial of King Charles I. His face assumed grave, serene and thoughtful and slowly did the following words come from his mouth :—

"I have been pondering deeply as what I could do to help the A.I.C.C. in solving the problem that is now placed before it. I feel that my presence as President at this juncture may possibly be a sort of obstacle or handicap in its path for instance the A.I.C.C. may feel inclined to appoint a Working Committee in which I shall be a misfit. I feel further that it may possibly be easier for the A.I.C.C. to settle the matter, if it can have new President. After mature deliberation therefore and in an entirely helpful spirit I am placing my resignation in your hands."

After this Pandit Jawaharlal moved a resolution asking Subhas to withdraw resignation and form the Working Committee with the Ex-members. Subhas did not rightly agree to the suggestion. The most regrettable

scenes then followed which became augmented with the breaking up of the meeting. Honourable members including Dr. Rajendraprasad were subjected to indignities and even Panditji was not spared, but he faced the crowd boldly. It was no doubt the spontaneous out-burst of feelings of younger minds who felt aggrieved at the resignation which they called injustice to their beloved leader, while others were sorely pained at the uncivil treatment accorded to the distinguished leaders who were here as our guests. Subhas felt these should not have taken place before him, and he helped the leaders in getting out of the crowd safely. Neither Subhas nor Pandit Jawahar joined the Working Committee and in their place Drs. Bidhan Roy and P. C. Ghose were taken.

Then followed meetings and processions in protest of the W. C. and in favour of Subhas. There was complete cleavage between workers and workers and leaders and leaders in all places, particularly in Bengal. Papers and Journals also were sharply divided in opinion. Early May, 1939, the 'Forward Block' was formed as a left wing of the Congress, with objects defined (hereafter Aug. 5, '39) "Attainment of Independence by all legitimate means. To fight provincialism and communalism and to seek to eradicate corruption in the Congress and to free that body from "vested interests and from the domination of the Congress Ministers".

An important meeting of the A. I. C. C. was next held at Bombay in the last week of June. Among other resolutions, the following two concern us vitally :—

- (1) *Satyagraha* is not to be launched in a place without the consent and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.
- (2) A Provincial Congress Committee is not to interfere with day to day work of Provincial Ministers.

The first resolution of the Working Committee seems to have been well-advised for the reason that with the thickening of clouds casting a shade of coming world-events, steps to be taken must be well-considered. The other resolution also stopped unnecessary interference with Congress Ministers who should have uninterrupted freedom of action, but wished that anything, to which exception could be taken, would be communicated to the Minister concerned or to the Parliamentary Subcommittee.

Subhas who had gone to Bombay to preside at the Conference of Forward Bloc was present at the A. I. C. C. when the resolutions were passed by a vast majority inspite of objection. When he came to Calcutta he fixed 9th July for an All India protest against the two resolutions. Dr. Rajendra Prasad wrote to him—as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress—not to hold the contemplated demonstrations

“as that would create an extraordinary situation for a subordinate body to rebel against a parent body and would lead to subversion of all discipline, resulting ultimately in the breaking of the whole Congress organisation built up with so much labour and sacrifice of people during the preceding fifty two years.” Subhas was at Bombay to preside at the demonstration there. He replied that he could not call off the meetings arranged to voice opposition and that he was quite prepared to face consequences. Demonstrations passed off, President asked for an explanation and Subhas gave a long one.

After this the Working Committee which met at Wardah on Aug. 11, 1939, passed a resolution declaring Subhas ineligible for any elective post for three years. The resolution was drafted by Mahatma himself and in order that everybody may judge the facts as a whole, I reproduce the whole resolution here—

“The Working Committee has given most anxious consideration to the action of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, the erstwhile President of the I. N. Congress in connection with the two resolutions of the last meeting of the A. I. C. C. known as “Satyagraha in the Provinces” and “Congress Ministries and P. C. C’s.”

“The Working Committee also considered the long letter of Mr. Subhas Bose in this connection.”

"The W. C. with great sorrow and reluctance has come to the conclusion that he has wholly missed the point raised by the President of the I. N. Congress as clearly set forth in his declaration. As an Ex-President he should also have realised that after having received peremptory instructions from the President it was his clear duty as the servant of the Nation to obey implicitly, even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling to appeal to the W. C. or the A. I. C. C., but he was bound, as long as the instructions of the President stood, to carry them out faithfully. This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organisation much more so of a vast organisation like the I. N. Congress which is engaged in the life and death struggle with the best organised and most powerful imperial corporation in the world".

"If what seems to be Mr. Subhas Bose's contention in his letter, that every member is free to interpret the Congress constitution as he likes, prevails, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time. The W. C. has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose."

"The Working Committee resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline Mr. Subhas Ch. Bose is declared disqualified as the President of the B. P. C. C. and to be a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years as from Aug., 1939."

"The W. C. trusts that Sj. S. C. Bose will see the error of his ways and loyally submit to the disciplinary action."

"The W. C. has taken note of indiscipline of many other congressmen including responsible official and it has refrained from taking any action as the members acted under the inspiration of Mr. Subhas C Bose. We however leave it open to the provincial organisations to take action if they think it necessary for the proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline. The Committee further empowers the President to take disciplinary action against such members who instead of expressing regret for their conduct of indiscipline, persist in it."

Trouble in the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was also brewing. In the general meeting held on April 28, 1939, Subhas was elected President and it was decided that he would form the Executive Council in consultation with the two other leaders of the minority groups—Sj. Kiran Sankar Roy and Sj. Profulla Ch. Ghosh. The Executive Council was not formed by Subhas till June 6, 1939, when out of 148 members of the Council, only 37 were taken from the other two groups and the remaining 111 members belonged to his party. Dr. Ghose and Sj. Roy contended that they were not consulted in the formation of the Committee as was enjoined by the meeting of April 28. The first meeting of the Council was however held on June 9.

In the meantime the A. I. C. C. meeting, held at Bombay on June 24, decided that election-tribunals are to be formed in all provinces and members to be chosen with the consent of at least three-fourths of the members of the Council. After this there was a requisition by 158 members of the B.P.C.C. for dissolving the Executive Council and forming another. The Requisition Meeting was held on July 26 and an Executive Council was formed with 111 members of Bose group who had already been there, and about 20 more new members of his party, leaving only 17 for the two other groups. The newly formed Executive Council now met on July 30 and formed an Election-Tribunal. Complaint was made to Dr. Rajendra Prasad who on the ground of shortness of time required for Requisition Meeting, held the Requisition Meeting and the proceedings of the Executive Council on July 30, *ultra viris*. It appears that the object of the Requisition Meeting was obviously strong with members of Forward Bloc, in order that the Election-Tribunal to the choice of the party could be easily formed ; and as such proceedings undoubtedly amounted to a tyranny of majority over minority. The award of Dr. Prasad was given on Aug. 17, 1939.

On Aug. 19, 1939 (Cor. 2nd Bhadra 1346) Subhas did a very noble act of constructive nature with a

view to have a National House to provide shelter and protection for National Activities and to serve as a **visible symbol** of the **hopes, ideals, dreams and aspirations** of those who are toiling and suffering for India's freedom. Subhas got the foundation stone of *Mahajati Sadan*—a House for the Great Nation, laid by Viswa-Kabi Rabindranath. Rs. three lacs were estimated as necessary for construction of the house on an open plot of land lying between Mercus Square and Chittaranjan Avenue, out of which over thirty thousand were already collected and materials worth Rs. 50,000 were also received.

Subhas in requesting Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to lay the foundation stone traced the history of our National Struggle and regretted as follows :—

“To-day clouds have darkened our political firmament and Congress stands at one of the cross-roads of history. Shall we hark back again to the days of constitutionalism which we thought we discarded in 1920, or shall we continue along the path of mass-movement which ends in mass-struggle? I shall not enter into a controversy. I shall only say this that the awakened masses of India cannot give up the method of self-help and self-reliance of mass organisation and mass struggle which has given them the success they have won and which will bring them the greater success that is yet to come. They can not give up their **birth-right of freedom** for a **sordid bargain with alien imperialism.**”

Referring to the poet he said—

“With the voice of eternity, you, Sir, have given all along passionate expression to the hopes and aspirations of our regenerated nation. Yours has been the message of undying youth. You have not only written poetry and produced art—but you have also lived Poetry and Art. You are not only India’s poet but also the poet of humanity.”

The poet also gave masterly oration, the last lines of which run thus—

“We welcome here the renascent soul of Bengal which has taken solemn initiation from history to dedicate its wealth of Intellect and learning at India’s shrine. To that beneficent heart of our culture we offer homage ; in our dignified self-respect we shall come nearer to our united nationalism, never yielding to the egoistic vanity of isolation which hurts our inherent humanity. High over all contentions politics let us keep the banner of truth flying and gray ;

Make them true,	O Lord
Bengal’s vows,	Bengal’s hopes
Bengal’s works,	Bengal’s Language
Let them be true.	
Bengal’s heart,	Bengal’s mind
Brothers and Sisters in	
Bengal’s home	
Let them be one,	O Lord,
make them one.	

And to this prayer, let this be added :

“May Bengal’s arm give strength to the arm of India, Bengal’s voice give truth to India’s message ; May Bengal, in service of freedom for India, never make itself ineffective by betraying the cause of unity.”

Mahajati Sadan is still an unfinished structure. It has not proceeded since Subhas left India. Will it not have a shape and not be converted to the purposes for which Subhas wanted the house under the blessing of *Viswa-Kabi* ? That work is now left not only to his followers and disciples but also to the nation as a whole.

As to disciplinary action again,—

On Aug. 23, Mahatmaji advised Subhas to submit to the decision of the Working Committee which he thought was of a mild nature. If however he felt that the Committee was wrong it was open to him to refer the matter to the A. I. C. C. He could even go to the open house of Congress against the decision of the Working Committee as well as the A. I. C. C. Subhas however acted according to his choice.

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial C. C. met on August 25 and affirmed full confidence in Subhas. It decided that pending the final decision of the Working Committee, the post of the President of the B. P. C. C. be kept vacant and that all business be transacted in consultation with him. The full

B. P. C. C. also met on the 30th August and confirmed the Executive Council by 213: 138, and asked the W. C. to revise the order passed on Subhas.

The Working Committee met on Sept. 11, 1939 and besides other resolutions of national importance wanted the resolution of Bengal P. C. C. passed on Aug. 30th to be expounded.

Although a new President—in the person of Sj. Rajendra Deb—was chosen, the B. P. C. C. still following the lead and guidance of Subhas and defying the resolution of the Working Committee was next ordered to be suspended on Dec. 21st and a new *Ad Hoc*. Committee was ordered to be formed under Sec. 13, *Clause II*, Congress Rules, for managing provincial matters relating to Congress, including election of delegates for the next Session of the Congress. The Committee consisted of Moulana Azad as Chairman and Dr. Profulla Ghosh, Sj. Kiran Sankar Roy, Dr. Bidhan Roy, and 3 others as members. This Committee was to function until the new B. P. C. C. was formed.

In the opinion of Subhas and the members of the Forward Bloc, the above gentlemen broke the solidarity of Bengal. They, on the other hand, held to the view that they maintained the solidarity of the entire Congress Organisation. Away from the excitement of the times, one can not but admire

the courage, and the spirit of discipline these gentlemen showed in the face of jeerings and open invectives. But for them, the Congress Organisation would have ceased to exist in Bengal.

After the new B. P. C. C. was formed, Babu Surendramohan Ghose was elected as President.

The year 1939 was a bad year of feuds and troubles, unheard of in the history of the last thirty years of the Congress. There was a split in 1907, but the difference was in ideology, and marked the triumph of 'Onward March' and 'Self-help'. In 1922, the President of the Congress had a resolution, to his choice, brought. He was defeated, but he resigned and within nine months brought round the whole Congress to his views. Experience shows his was the right move which is still working mainly. Subhas also is a strong personality and had a large following. He differed on the grounds of New Leadership and New Programme. As a leader, he had all the qualities and if he had a New Programme, he should have resigned from the Executive and should have, not simply through demonstration but through work, converted the whole country to his views as well. As Subhas did not do so, his defiance reminded us of a parallel, when in 1923, the three provinces—Bengal under Sj. Shyamsundar, Tamil Nad under Sj. Raja-

Gopalachari and Gujrat under Sardar Ballavbhai Patel rebelled against the decision of the A. I. C. C. in May (1923) in Bombay, asking people not to make any propaganda against Council-entry. In the next meeting of the A. I. C. C. in July at Nagpur, Pandit Jawaharlal brought a resolution calling for disciplinary measure against the above provinces for disobedience, but the resolution was lost by 65 : 63, and Pandit Jawaharlal and others of his views resigned from the Working Committee as protest. No doubt things were set aright by the subsequent triumph of the Swarajya party and the cordiality and combination amongst the trio—Mahatma, Deshbandhu and Pandit Matilal which brought all the warring elements into a union worthy of the Congress, but could there be no one in India in 1939 who could bridge the gulf between Mahatmaji and his followers on one side and Subhas on the other, giving so great a personality with dynamic energy scope for work within the Congress? If Mr. Sarat Bose could be taken to the fold of the Congress, with honour, thanks to the members of the Working Committee, why could not Subhas have been kept within the Congress-fold with a broader outlook of things? There is no doubt that his exit was a great loss to the Congress.

Misunderstanding with the Congress Working

Committee continued and in an article under caption—"The Correct Line" in his newly started weekly organ "Forward Bloc" under the editorship of our esteemed friend Sj. Satya Ranjan Bakshi, after criticising Gandhiji for Chourichura, Harijan Movement and Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Subhas thus continued—

"Let the Congress Working Committee have the leadership of the country for all time, we have no objection to that. But a leader must lead. We shall hope against hope that the Committee will soon make a move. But if they do not, then we must act. We are confident that the masses will follow, no matter who gives the lead."

As Subhas was seriously thinking of giving a lead, Congress Working Committee was also not idle. It began to proceed in the right line too but Subhas misjudged it. Thus his observations as President of the Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh in March, 1940, were not rightly made. He observed—

"What has distressed and wildered us during the last year and a half is the fact that while on the one hand red-hot resolutions are passed and statements issued by the members of the Working Committee, simultaneously other remarks are made and statements

issued either by Mahatma Gandhi or by the Rightist leaders which create a totally different impression on the average mind.

"The result of all this has been that the British Government have ceased to take the Congress seriously and have formed the impression that however much the Congressmen may talk, they will not ultimately show the fight—

"A determined and wide-spread effort is needed."

On the same same day the conference was held, the Fifty third Session of the Congress also met at Ramgarh under the presidency of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Subhas's speech was delivered first, but at the time when in the Congress Pandit Moulana Azad was delivering speech, there was a heavy shower of rain which washed Ramgarh and presented a spectacle of waste, confusion and disorder. The water in some places was waist-deep and Moulana's speech was taken as read.

After coming from Ramgarh, Subhas entered into an arrangement with the Moslem League in the Calcutta Corporation and got himself and Mr. B. C. Chatterjee (an withdrawal from Hindu Mahasabha) elected as Aldermen through joint efforts of his party as well as Members of the Muslim League. The Hindu Mahasabha protested against the Union and called meetings which were dispersed. A meeting at the Town Hall in which

Mr. Nepal Roy a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha was severely wounded and chairs hurled spoke badly about the situation of the time. Subhas's party used to pass by the name of the Congress, although the constitutional *Ad. Hoc Committee* was managing the Congress work. Of course Subhas was not responsible for these happenings but the atmosphere presented really a spirit of discord and dissension only.

After his resignation as President of the Congress on April 29, 1939, till the above Conference, Subhas delivered a number of lectures in large assemblies in different places of the country. S. J. Trilokhy Chakrabarty, one of the great sufferers and sincerest workers of the old *Anusilan Samity* of Dacca travelled with Subhas about the time, specially in Delhi and United Provinces and I am credibly informed that all the meetings Subhas addressed used to be unusually crowded and enthusiastic inspite of opposition from certain quarters. People loved him and listened to his speeches no doubt, but as there was no workable programme yet, he could not turn his popularity into action.

Subhas wanted to take an advantage of the international situation and chalked out a plan of offering *Satyagraha* for the removal of the Holwell Monument to the north-west corner of the Dalhousie Square.

When the project was being made. Moulana FuzlulHuq the Chief Minister of the Government of Bengal announced that Goveonment had already been in contemplation of getting it removed. Some youngmen got also ready to offer themselves for arrest and some were convicted too. On the 2nd July, at 2-30 p. m. when Subhas was preparing himself to go out after having taken tea along with Alderman Mr. B. C. Chatterjee, Bar-at-Law, a number of Police officers came and took him to the Presidency Jail under Sec. 129 of the Defence of India Rules. The Monument was no doubt removed but there was no further enthusiam of anybody after his arrest. If however within the four corners of the British Administration he could not give an effective programme of work commensurate with things big that were in his mind, the All Mighty God. reserved him, however, for something bigger and gave him a chance to work a programme to his choice by which **he was able to fully assert and expand himself** and the full activities follow immediately in our next chapter.

SEVENTH CHAPTER

The Great Fighter

Netaji Subhas

After his arrest, Subhas stayed in the Presidency Jail, Alipore from July 2 to December 5, 1940. The European war had already broken out and the Government in the meantime began to treat India as if it was a bellegerent country. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress not only resolved to non-co-operate with war but allowed also individual Civil Disobedience for persons who would oppose the war. A good number of persons including Messrs. Bhabhe, Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Babu Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Messrs. Kher, Asafali and others offered themselves for arrest and Rastrapati Azad himself was arrested as a Civil resister at Allahabad on January 3, 1941 and taken to Naini Central Jail.

Subhas too had no rest even in jail and was undergoing trials in two Courts before Mr. Waliul Islam, Add. Chief Presidency Magistrate for Charges of Sedition for a speech delivered at the Mahammad Ali Park on April 11, 1940, as well as for the article "Day of Reckoning" published on May 18, 1940, in Forward Bloc and before Mr. E. G. Creek, I. C. S.

Addl. District Magistrate, Alipore for his speeches at Deshapriya Park and Rashbagan on February 22 and 24, 1940 respectively. The Criminal Cases against him were being adjourned from time to time.

In view of the fact that Government would not let him work unhampered, Subhas determined to go on hunger-strike from November 29, 1940, and before doing that he addressed a letter to Sir John Herbert the then Governor of Bengal which has been known as the "Historic letter of Subhas" a part of which is given below.

"What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales and over the broad plains to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands? What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self immolation at the alter of one's cause? This is the technique of the Soul. The Individual must die, so that the nation may live. To day I must die so that India may win freedom and glory.

He commenced his fast from the appointed day.

Within seven days his health became very weak with pulse quick and intermittent, heart-sounds scarcely audible and a state of extreme prostration. As his condition caused alarm, Government released him for reasons of health on December 5, 1940.

The Doctors advised outsiders not to disturb him during the period of his illness.

After coming out of jail, he remained completely shut up in his room. He was supposed only to perform religious practices. His diet consisted of fruit-juice only which used to be left near the door of his room.

For over a month he thus passed his time in meditation. Whether it was in religious contemplation or not, none could say, but it seems he was seriously thinking of himself and his future activities.

He found that whatever he would do, Government would be cross on him. Four cases were already hanging on him, and also who knows others might not be added. His determination to fast unto death was also foiled by the order of release. Besides why should such a valuable life be laid down when there were ample things to be done. But he has no place now in the Congress, even he is debarred from his own Provincial Congress Committee. Friends and followers of All India had left him already. Socialists were neutral in Tripuri, Royists joined or would be joining

the Government. Some Trade Unionists became communists, the Anti-compromise Conference at Ramgarh cost him a good amount of money without much tangible result, the Forward Bloc was still in infancy, and yet the very colleagues whom he had left as Rightists were, instead of helping the war, launching an Anti-war propaganda and courting arrests. Why he of all others with his great qualities and love of country, with readiness to give up life any moment, should he squander at his time inactive in jails, without finding any opportunity to convert it to the best use. These were probably the thoughts which must have been uppermost in his mind in that dreary period of one month.

In the courts again when he was not in a fit condition to attend trial, as the first physician of the Calcutta Medical College reported, the cases against him had to be adjourned from time to time on Medical certificates.

On the 16th January, 1941, some friends saw him. He had trimmed beard of French cut. He used to tell his friends :—

‘This is the last occasion you will meet me’.

None thereafter heard of him till he was no longer seen also by any person either in his house at 38/2, Elgin Road or in any part of Calcutta, till his

disappearance was detected in the eyes of the public on the 27th January, 1941. His exit in the teeth of vigilant watch of the Intelligence Department which made it about impossible for any body to pass by the main gate undetected, gave rise to various rumours. Some thought that he had passed by the back door, some thought he had left for the U. P. or the Punjab and some held that he had gone to Diamond Harbour by car where he must have been picked up by a Japanese Steamer and taken to Tokio which would be strengthening its hands before its projected declaration of war with the British power. His brother Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose thought from circumstances that it was a case of spiritual renunciation and wired therefore to Mahatma Gandhi to that effect. His mother too thought likewise. Sometime after, his mother saw a film show of *Nemai Sanyas* (Renunciation of *Mahāprabhu*). A Swarajist lady of the old Non-cooperation days was with her. As soon as *Nemai* was seen leaving the house at dead of night and his mother Sachi weeping for the son, she exclaimed with a sigh "Such has also been the case of my Subhas." This belief was further aggravated by the fact that to Sardar Sardul Sing Cavasheer who had come to see him a few days before, he is said to have expressed that he was thinking of renouncing the the world.

The common belief about his reported departure to Tokio was however gaining strength, more so by the subsequent declaration of Japan's war against Allies on December 7, 1941 and the arrest of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, four days later, on the suspicion of his alleged association with the Japanese, and this appealed more to the people. Sardar Sardul Singh was of this belief that Subhas must have some arrangement with the Japanese and had escaped to Japan. Nothing however was heard except in the papers about warrants, proclamations and attachments of his property for non-appearance in the criminal cases against him till at last people were taken by surprise when the Home Secretary in reply to a question put by Mr. Yubraj Sing, member of the Council of State, stated about Subhas's escape to Europe. No information, however, as to how he disappeared and through which route he had passed to reach Europe, was available.

Some time after we read in papers about his reported journey to Burdwan and thence through the Punjab Mail (vide *Sant Sipahi* of Tara Sing). It speaks of the flight in December to Peshwar, with the help of a communist Punjabee Sikh and an absconder in a murder case. The story of his departure from his house to Peshwar and thence to Kabul comes next in a more reliable way through

the pen of Mr. Uttam Chand of Peshwar, then a Radio dealer at Kabul, from the articles he had contributed to *Hindusthan Times*. The facts as given by him supply the link of events from Calcutta to Berlin and the authenticity of these is further corroborated by the writer's subsequent incarceration and confiscation of property for having given shelter to Subhas. According to him Subhas left the house at 1-25 A. M. in the night of the 15th January, 1941 (not in December) dressed as a Lucknow Moulvi with beards grown within the last forty days. The exit was so cleverly planned that it could simply be like that of the flight of the Marhatta hero Sivaji from the court of Aurangazeb. None recognised him on the way.

On that evening at 8 P. M. he proceeded with the help of some persons in a car to Burdwan and got on the Panjab Mail in a second class compartment where a berth had been reserved for him.

The story of his escape has now come from the most reliable source through the statement of Sriman Sisir Kumar Bose, third son of Mr. Sarat Bose, who accompanied Subhas at dead of night on the 17th Jan. in a car driving it through Grand Trunk Road to Gomoh where Sisir left his uncle to start by the Delhi Mail. If the information is accurate and there is no

reason why it should not be, there is some discrepancy, with regard to date, time and the station where Subhas caught the train, from that of Sj. Uttamchand. According to the latter Subhas left Calcutta on the 15th at 8 P.M. and caught the train at Burdwan and as this part of the statement was based on hearsay, such discrepancies are quite natural.

Sisir was detained in jail for a long period, and so also were Sriman Arabinda Bose, third son of Sj. Suresh Chandra Bose and Dwijen Bose, son of Sj. Satish Chandra Bose. All the three nephews suffered a great deal evidently for their uncle.

Sisir says the following about the departure of his uncle :—

“Preparations for his departure were being made till his release from detention following the hunger-strike. We actually left on the 17th Jan., 1941 at 1-25 A.M. in a car, myself and Netaji were the only passengers in the car. It was a thrilling drive in a moonlit night. We left when most of the members of the house had gone to sleep. Netaji was dressed as an up-country Muslim. He had with him one suitcase, bedding and an attache case. From Elgin Road we had to take the Grand Trunk Road and after whole night drive at top speed we hid ourselves at a certain place for the day and in the evening we resumed the journey.

by car. We reached Gomoh, about 210 miles from Calcutta from where he got into a train for Northern India in the early hours of the 18th January, 1941. I left him in front of the station and parted there. The last words of Netaji were—

“I am off, you go back’—”

Subhas then reached Peshwar on the 17th. To a person dressed as a Sikh who was travelling in the same compartment of the train, he gave his new name as Moulvi Ziauddin, his tight pyjamas, a Sherwani and a fez cap having made him every inch a Moulvi. At the Station, at the terminus, a car that was waiting for him took him to the house of one Abbas where he stayed for two days. On the 19th he was made to dress himself in Pathan clothes and was given an escort with whom he left Peshwar in a car. Rahamat Khan as the escort Bhagatram was named and Ziauddin passed through Jamrud and by-passing the Landikotal Fort reached Garhi, staying there at night in the place of a Pir. From there they went on foot and crossed the Indian border in the evening with the help of two armed Afgans. With the help of credentials from a big Khan that both these persons were highly reliable and bound on pilgrimage for whose conduct he was personally responsible, they crossed the Cabul river and now that the road was metalled,

motored down to Kabul, Ziauddin disguising himself as a deaf and dumb person and accompanying his brother Rahamat. They reached Kabul and were putting up in a lorry-driver's inn. An Afgan Police watcher was teasing them much whose greedy clutches they avoided with offers of money, sometimes even parting with wrist-watch and fountain pen. Rahamat Khan also tried to contact the Russian Ambassador, meeting him on the way while going in a car with flag and persuading him to help Subhas to reach Moscow, but being unable to produce the evidence of identity as demanded, they had to be detained. They could bear no longer the demands of the greedy Afgan policeman and therefore sought the shelter of Uttam Chand who risked everything by giving shelter to the hero he had admiration for. It is Uttam Chand who with the help of the Italian Ambassador and his wife was able to get the pass-port to go to Rome & Berlin, as Russia, though yet bound with Germany by a Non-aggression Trade Pact from 1939 was in prospect of joining the allied powers—Britain and America, and had no intention therefore to offend England.

Both Germany and Italy were then united as Allies and were popularly known as the two fascist and axis powers of Europe. With worries and anxieties a month passed when actually the pass-port came to their hands.

On the 18th March, 1941, accompanied by the two German Officers (Dr. Wellerson being one) and one Italian, Bose proceeded to the Russian frontier with his friend Rahamatullah (really Bhagatram) whom he left behind while crossing the river dividing Afgan and Russian borders. He reached Moscow on the 27th March. There was a plane waiting and it took him to Berlin. The papers of Berlin dated March 28 came out, with broad lines :

“Indian Great Leader is now at Berlin”.

Two months after, Germany declared war against Russia, in June, 1941, and suddenly invaded it to a front extending over thousand miles.

Subhas in that condition of European war, stayed in Berlin for about two years. He did not pass his days idly but with German help raised an army composed of Indians who had been made prisoners of war during the fight between Germany and France. The army known as Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fowz) that was formed here was meant to help Berlin if that could help India to get freedom. Many of the Indian students who were then in Germany also joined him. He got help from General Ribbendrop and a photo showing Subhas and Herr Hitler demonstrates that he was held in great esteem by the German.

Fuherar. The latter honoured him as the Indian Fuherar. But although he spent his time profitably in Germany, full opportunity was awaiting him elsewhere and we shall come to that shortly.

In the meantime on August 8, 1942, the 'Quit India' resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee at Bombay and all the leaders were arrested in the morning within a few hours even when the ink with which the resolution was written did not get dry. This increased Subhas Chandra's enthusiasm all the more.

At the Eastern Front

Japan was so long neutral and when its Prime-Minister Matsuko had visited Germany and Russia, none could gather the reasons of his tour. However it declared war at last on the Allies on December 7, 1941, and attacked America through sea by occupying Aleutian and Howai islands in the Pacific. It also seized the Andaman and Nicobar islands and had Burma and Malayan Peninsula for its objective. Air-raids by Japan in December, 1941 struck terror into the citizens of Calcutta which was practically evacuated, and made also Britain pause in dejection when its two war-ships 'Prince of Wales' and 'Repulse' were sunk off the coast of Singapore.

Singapore fell to the Japs on February 15, 1942, and Rangoon too was evacuated on March 15. Strangely within a short time Burma and Malaya, Siam and Indo-China, besides a few invaluable positions on the Chinese sea, slipped off from the hands of Britain and all eyes were then fixed upon India too. East became a matter of great concern to Britain and Sir Stafford Crips was sent here with some proposals in March, 1942. Burma was still recently an Indian province and its rice was the principal import for the people of India. Half of the Indian population were left behind when it became the enemy-occupied territory. Burma's fall affected India materially and it was in everybody's lips that much of the ruinous effects of the great famine of 1943, could have been avoided, had not Burma fallen. It is thus necessary to recant the kind of administration Burma had, after the Japanese occupied it, and we would thus give a realistic picture what Japanese supremacy meant for us, and other places of the East, were Japan supreme.

In Burma there were different Schools of political thought. U. Saw was the leader of a party whose cry was "Burma for Burmans". We know when he went to England, he was not allowed to come back. Dr. Ba Maw was the leader of Syentha Party akin to Krishak Praja Party of Bengal, i.e., Proletariat.

There was also another party—the Thakin-party or the master-party. Their number was small, with only 6 members in the Burma legislature in 1941. Their leader Thakin Tu Aung—a youngman of Rangoon University, History Department, acted really as a guide to the Jap army from Moulmein to Rangoon, his object being to secure freedom with Jap's help, but to their surprise he and his followers were soon disillusioned. They however found out their mistake but it was then too late.

Now after the occupation of Burma, Japs established a so-called National Government in August, 1942, declaring Burma as independent with Dr. Ba Maw at the head. Twelve Burman ministers were no doubt appointed with Dr. Ba Maw as the Supreme Civil Dictator, the military control remaining with the Japs but a Jap advisor in each of the six departments was overhead. Practically the Burmans were completely under Jap grip. The Burmans felt it, but there was no help. The two parties Thakin and Syentha through Jap advice merged into one by Dr. Ba Maw who named it Do Boma Syentha Thakin Asiyano—'We Burman Proletareate and Masters League'.

Burma as independent and Dr. Ba Maw as *Adipati* having power to nominate all ministers sounded sweet no doubt. But Burma was practically in Jap control, even budget could not be passed without the consent

of Jap General. Not to speak of Foreign relations which must be through Jap General, even all transport was through the Jap agency. Such state of things continued for two months, only after which even for Adipati a Supreme advisor was appointed, in the person of Sabata. Then followed the appointment of one Supreme Ambassador and 30 more Assistant Advisors. These appointments thoroughly disillusioned the Burmans about their so-called independence and people began to rally round Aung Saw when he formed the Anti-Fascist Party for the expulsion of the Japs.

This was the back-ground which made the patriotic Indian population (both civil and military) dislike Jap control from the beginning. Indians in the far East could not therefore, have any puppet Government under Jap control for their mother country India. Instances of Jap cruelty in Malaya were not also wanting.

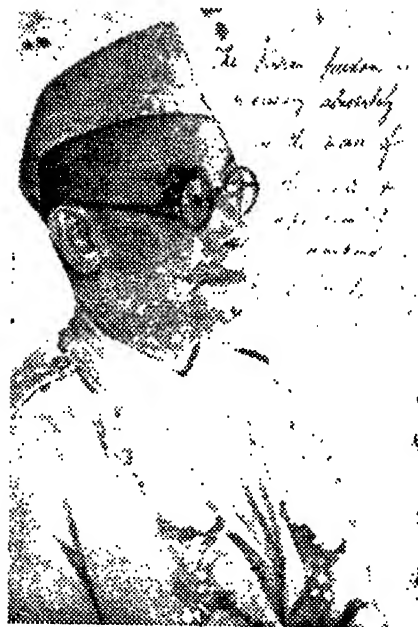
At the same time after the occupation of Burma, Malay and other places when the allied soldiers were made prisoners of war and sent to concentration camps, Indian soldiers, since they did not fight against the Japs, were given option either to join the Japs or remain behind prison bars as others. Besides the British officers who were at their head asked them to obey the Japs as they had done themselves (British).

Left to their fates they had no other way but to take a bold step. In this statement before the I. N. A. Court Martial,—Captain Sehgal recounted the circumstances in which he felt compelled to join the I. N. A. He referred to the meeting held at the Ferrar Park in Singapore on February 17, 1942 and said that Lt. Col. Hunt as the representative of the British handed over the Indian officers and men to the Japanese like a flock of sheep. "This came to us" Captain Sehgal went on as "a great blow to us all. The Indian Army had fought bravely against the heaviest odds and in return the British High Command had left them completely at the mercy of the Japanese."

Under the circumstances Indian soldiers, as they were inspired with burning patriotism and an urge for the liberation of the country, formed themselves into an Indian National Army in March, 1942. But situated as they were, they found that there was no possibility of the attainment of their object without Jap help and Jap collaboration. Their position was critical. They wanted Jap help but keeping their control to them as much as was possible in the present complex situation. Captain Mohan Sing was then the leader. It was then decided that a Good Will Mission would be sent to Tokyo in obedience to an invitation which had come from Sri Rash Behari Bose asking representatives from Malay and Thailand to go on a mission there.

Captain Mohan Sing, Col. N. S. Gill, Col. Raghaban (Malay), Mr. S. C. Guha (Advocate, Singapore), Captain Mohammad Akram, Captain K. P. K. Menon, Nityananda Swami formed the mission. The last two gentlemen had great influence with the Siamese people but unfortunately they died on the way due to the crash of the plane carrying them. The remaining members met Sri Rash Behari Bose at Tokyo.

While in India Rash Behari generally stayed at Chandannagore (Hughly) and later went to live at Dehradun. Originally he belonged to the Anusilan Samity. In early 1912 to 1914 Rash Behari Bose was considered to be the leader of a vast conspiracy in India to wage war against the Government and was described as the brain and master in the Delhi, Banares and Lahore Conspiracy cases in 1914 and 1915 with S. Sachin Sanyal as his assistant. That was the time when the Great War broke out in Europe. The clever way in which Rash Behari Bose left the shores of India in 1915 for Japan did not fail even to attract our novelists and *Sabyasachi* in *Pather Dabi* of the distinguished novel of S. Sarat Chatterjee is believed to portray his activities. He was also suspected as being connected with an attempt to take the life of Lord Hardinge, Governor-General and Viceroy in December, 1912. Such a man who eluded all police pursuits got his



**Sree Rash Behari Bose, the Great Indian Revolutionary,
who formed the I.N.A. before Subhas Chandra
reorganised it. The 1st President of the
Indian Independence League, 1942.**



Mr Bulabhai Desai, whose masterly defence
in the I. N. A. Trial at the Red Fort
Delhi, is a matter of History.

place of shelter in Tokyo and by constant association with the Japanese fixed also his matrimonial connection there. His son *Bharat* was often heard on the Radio as speaking for Indian liberation. Looked at from external circumstances Rash Behari Bose was friendly to Japan, but intense and burning patriotism and urge for the attainment of India's freedom was still fresh in him. *He was really a great patriot.* Rash Behari Bose immediately took up the cause of the mission and chalked out plans there. The holding of a conference also was decided upon here.

The Conference was held early June, 1942, for eight days from 15th to 23rd with great enthusiasm at *Bangkok*, in which Indians from all over East Asia—Thailand, Burma, China, Malaya, Singapore, Indo-China, Java, Sumatra, Philipines—attended. Rash Behari Bose presided and raised the Tricolour Flag of the I. N. Congress. In his speech, he paid great tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and asked people to unite and deliver their mother country from poverty, slavery and helplessness. Amongst others, the following resolutions deserve notice :

- (1) An Army to fight for complete independence of India is to be re-constructed.
- (2) A Constitution of Government to the choice of the people, after victory, is to be drafted.

With these objects in view the *Independence League* was formed here with Head Quarters at Bangkok and with Rash Behari Bose as President, to be assisted by a Council of Action consisting of five members. It caught the imagination of the people. Enthusiasm was great, branches were formed in all parts of the far East and forty thousand civilians with which the soldiers who were left behind also joined, were combined. Money was not wanting ; and people, both to fight and serve by doing nursing work in fronts, came in numbers. Their intense bravery, patriotism and spirit of sacrifice were a matter of pride to every Indian. Captain Mohan Sing was the G. O. C. of the Indian National Army thus formed, and Rash Behari Bose was the President of the Indian Independence League and Chairman of the Council of Action with Capt. Mohan Sing, G. O. C., and Messrs. Raghavan, Menon, Gillani, to which Col. J. R. Bhonsle was later added.

The Japanese, of course, wanted to form an army as subordinate to them, but the above leaders did not agree to that proposal. Although Japan declared that Independence of India was one of its war-aims and it had no territorial or economic ambitions over India, its feeling towards the Indian Independence League was not, however, satisfactory.

Acute differences then arose in September, 1942

between the Indian Independence League and the Japanese, and the latter finding that the League would never play to their tune, set up a rival League under the name of 'Youth League'. They also interfered with the working of the Council of Action.

Relations between Rash Behari Bose, President of the Indian Independence League and Chairman of the Council of Action and Captain Mohan Sing grew also to be very strained at this stage. The crown in the I. N. A. Trial at Delhi against Shah Nawaz, Col. Dhillon, and Capt. Sehgal, tried to prove, without success, a document alleged to be in Rash Behari Bose's hand complaining of Mohan Sing's cruelty to the Indians, but the misunderstanding really was with regard to control of power. G. O. C. Mohan Sing did not like to be under the League, the parent organisation, any way, but Bose and Raghavan wanted the army to be under the guidance of the head—The President. Mohan Sing's further complaint was that since Bose had lived so long with the Japanese, he allowed himself to be controlled by them, while he felt that the Japanese should be dealt with a firmer hand than what Bose was able to do. Singh thus took a lot of responsibility on himself in dealing with the Japs.

A few days after, Col. Mohan Sing was arrested by the Japanese. Previous to this, Col. N. S.

Gill had also been arrested on the 8th Dec., 1942 by the Japanese who complained of his (Gill's) refusal to send Indian soldiers to the Burma front without full clarification of Japan's war-aims. This arrest was without consultation of the Council of Action and as a result and specially for instructions given by Col. Mohan Sing, all the officers and members of the Council resigned except Rash Behari Bose himself. He, however, left no stone unturned to re-organise the army. People's enthusiasm abated and many also were still for British connection. He then sent a Questionnaire to officers and collected their views. The condition of the people at the time may better be gathered from an order issued by Rash Behari Bose on February 13, 1943 portions of which are quoted below :—

"I have studied carefully the answers given by officers of the I. N. A. I note that practically all officers are prepared to fight and sacrifice for the freedom of our motherland but I regret to say that not all of them are willing to remain in the I. N. A. These officers fall into the following categories :

(1) Those who are afraid of taking action against the British.

(2) Those who do not seem to have full faith in the *Indian National Congress*.

(3) Those who believe in Dominion Status for India which assumes British victory.

(4) Those who do not wish to remain in I. N. A. under the present circumstances.

“Such views if expressed by prisoners of war may well be understood but coming as they do from officers of the I. N. A. they only give rise to speculation as to the motives which prompted these officers to join the movement which was solely to fight for the complete independence of India. Whatever the status of a dominion it remains a dominion of British and as such a watch-dog of Britain. *India's fight against Britain has now reached a critical stage.*”

Sri Rash Behari Bose was thus able to re-organise the Indian National Army again, but in a different way this time. There was a directorate of Military Bureau consisting amongst others of Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz as Chief of General Staff and Captain Sehgal as Military Secretary. Gurbuksh Singh Dhillon also joined. They belong to the land of Five Waters and had been in the British Regiment. There was also a Judge Advocate. Shah Nawaz said, “The Azad Hind Fouz is a volunteer Corps. Those who will join it will do so only for the sake of love for country and not for the lure of money or pay. Any one who wants to volunteer for achieving freedom of

India should give his name to I. N. A. Hd. Qr. and do so only for the sake of love for country and not otherwise."

Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal are the heroes of the *Punjab* about whose valiant sons at one time, our poet Rabindranath sang in "Bandibeer".

*"Eshechhe shey Ek din
Laksha parne Sanka na jane
Na rakhe Kaharo reen
Jivana mrittoo payèr bhritta
Chitta bhabana heen
Panchanadeer Ghiri dasha-teer
Eshechhe shey Ek din."*

**"Ah, that day is come
Swarms of souls—they care none
Fear none, owe none a penny,
Life or Death always at Command
Their minds are without worries
Through the ten banks of the Five Rivers
All are awake Oh, what joy, the day is
really come !"**

Our countrymen should still remember the First and the most sensational I. N. A. Trial in which Col.

Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal got acquittal, thanks to the efforts of the Indian National Congress, the organising ability of Pandit Jawaharlal and the forensic lore of late *Mr. Bhulabhai Desai* and last though not the least of the broadness of views of Lord Auchinleck.

But inspite of his best attempts, Rash Behari Bose was not successful* to rally round all men to his banner with the same zeal of March, 1942. There were difficulties also at the Malayan Branch. He then thought and felt what was wanting to give fillip to the men and considered that his long association with Japan might be at the root. He never liked Japanese control, but Japan's help he had to take. Patriot as he was, he did not ignore the general trend of opinion and therefore fixed his thought on Subhas, who was already forming Indian National Army in Berlin and who would be the right man to combine the scattered forces of the East Asia, give them the right lead and turn them to fight for freedom of their mother country—India. Besides he thought he was growing old, whereas Subhas was quite young and had by this time twice presided over the National Congress and commanded

* Major General A. C. Chatterjee also says in a meeting at Dacca on June 1. 1. 46 :

“Mohon Sing demobilised I. N. A. The organisation was however revived by Rash Behari Bose from Jan., 1943, but he could not attain an effective success.”

sufficient confidence of the Indian people. Through telephonic arrangement he talked to Subhas and got his consent. After that he prevailed upon the Japanese Government to ask Berlin to send Subhas in a safe journey to Tokyo.

This was the history behind Subhas's journey from Germany to East.

Rash Behari next called a conference at Singapore on April 28, 1943 and announced about the expected arrival of Subhas and requested the delegates to help him to give the charge of the entire movement to him. The news gave everybody full satisfaction and joy and everybody felt what self-abnegation Rash Behari was possessed of.*

Germany knew very well that with Subhas's help Japan would be able to open a second front on the Indian soil and sent him through a big sub-marine which encountered no danger on the way except in one place on the Atlantic Ocean when it floated by mistake on the surface and had just attracted the notice of an English officer, but before it was aimed at, it immediately went down. Subhas was bound for Sumatra and reached a port of the island in three months. Then he flew to Tokyo and reached it on the 20th June, 1943. He had next an interview with

* While in India also he never hankered after any power.

General Tojo and discussed plans with him. With Tojo's consent Subhas came to Singapore the present Head Quarters of the Indian Independence League, removed lately from Bangkok. Before that he had also spoken from Tokyo through Radio. Rash Behari Bose handed over his power and charge of the Indian National Army on July 4, 1943 at a Conference of delegates representing Indian Independence League. The scene was very touching and there was an outburst of frenzied cheering. The army was very much impressed with Subhas's presence, demeanour, spirit and look which vividly answered their expectation. They saluted him as their "*Netaji*" the President of the Indian Independence League & Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army and listened to with rapt attention the soul-stirring speech* he delivered on that solemn occasion, when he described all his sufferings since 1921, and last his exhortation to soldiers.

"In the interests of the Indian Independence movement and of the Azad Hind Fouz, I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day. This is a matter of joy and pride to me, because for an Indian there can be no greater honour than to be

* From the opening speech of the Advocate General in the Azad Hind Trial of Shah Nawaz, Sehgal & Dillon.

Commander of India's Army of Liberation. The Azad Hind Fouz has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal—the freedom of India—and only one will—to do or die in the cause of India's freedom."

From the moment the above words came from the lips of *Netaji*, the whole atmosphere was electrified. Military men and civilians numbering about 30 lacs of people in South East Asia rallied to *Netaji's* banner and were of one mind and thought. He used to be greeted as *Netaji* which became his appellation from now. Indeed all the qualifications requisite for leadership in that trying situation were in him. In the same meeting he made the announcement that he would establish a Provisional Govt. as early as possible. In the following month he went to Bangkok, capital of Syam and affiliated the army to I. N. A.

On the 25th august he expressed his intention to invade India and delivered an awe-inspiring address the following lines of which only are quoted.

He said—

Comrades, officers and friends—

"There in the distance beyond that river, beyond those jungles, beyond those hills and dales, lies the promised land the sacred land from which we sprang—the land to which we shall now return. Hark, India is calling...Blood

is calling to blood. Rise, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms... We shall make our way through the enemy's ranks or if God wills we shall die a martyr's death. And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to FREEDOM."

This was the turning point of Subhas's life. His patriotism was burning, his love of country was immense and his courage was considerable. From 1921, when he joined Deshbandhu, he showed his worth and was always anxious for a fighting programme and neither cared for anything nor feared death. If after that in 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1939-40, he stood against the other leaders of the Congress, the psychology of his mind has to be grasped. He did not argue or differ for argument's sake, but his mind could not rest satisfied with the only programme of non-violent non-co-operation and its counterpart Civil Disobedience, the maximum the Congress had in its stock. As he could not wholeheartedly take up the programme, he could not make much headway in the long run, although on every occasion he could capture the imagination of the majority. It is for this Deshbandhu Das was invulnerable upto the last as he had the courage of conviction for non-violent non-co-operation—both on principle and as policy, whereas Subhas with all his

fiery ideas had to labour under a handicap and smarted often under the rulings of the Congress which he considered as overbearing and partial. Thus he no doubt had formed the Congress Democratic Party or differed from Congress principle of timely settlement, he could not however proceed further because no other programme could possibly be taken in India. Some of the fiery adherents also following him could not long keep pace with or would have fallen back. What he differed for at times with Mahatmaji, he would have equally differed with his master Deshbandhu, were he alive now. But what is the genesis ? Was it in the policy of an obstruction ? No, it was in his mind. His mind was large and it searched for something grander with the same idea of independence as other leaders do possess. But he was not satisfied with the existing programme and wanted something to attain his ideal quicker. But could the Congress satisfy him ? Assuredly not.

But he was a lucky man. The Almighty God knew his mind and satisfied what he desired (*Jadrishi bhabanajasya, sidhhirbhabati tadrishi*). He now got a thing to his heart's content for the fulfilment of his mission and he could thus bring forth all his energies to play and he was seen now in his true colours. He was thus not only **Netaji** by appellation but he

became so in conviction, courage and deeds. It is thus no wonder if his followers of the army regarded him more than their father and mother and the weeping of Shah Nawaz on coming to his house on January 23, 1946 with words of despair "Nataji, I have failed, I have failed" was certainly not simply a feeling of sentiment only. Thus he led a fighting band for the liberty of his country and whether he won or failed, he will in all ages remain enshrined in the hearts of all as a valiant patriot of India like other patriots of the past.

Getting the whole I. N. A. *enbloc*, who could live and die for him he proceeded to form the Indian National Government. Thus Mr. S. A. Ayer, who was Publicity and Propaganda Minister of Provisional Government says on December 11, in his evidence before the I. N. A. Court Martial :

"On October 21, 1943 Subhas Bose conceived the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the announcement was received with a tremendous outburst of applause and cheering. After announcing the names of the members of the Govt. Netaji Subhas Bose took the oath of allegiance to India. After that, other members of the Government took the oath of allegiance to India and to Netaji Subhas. The entire proceedings were punctuated with

outbursts of cheering and shouts of *Subhas Chandra Bose Ki Jai* and *Arzi Hukumat Azad Hind Ki Jai*.

"In his first Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Sonan 21 October, 1943) amongst other things (History from 1757 A. D. being narrated) he read the following :

'It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a Permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people.

'...We hereby pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her freedom, of her welfare and her exaltation among the nations of the world'."

The Government was constituted as follows :

(1) Subhas Chandra Bose—Head of the State,

Prime Minister and Minister for War, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army.

(2) *Rash Behari Bose*—(Supreme Adviser)

(3) Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz—(Representative of the Armed Force)

(4) Lt. Col. A. C. Chatterjee.—(Finance)

(5) Captain Miss Lakshmi—(Women's organisation)

(6) Karim Gani, Debnath Das, D. M. Khan, A. Yellappa, J. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh—(Advisers)

(7) A. N. Sarkar—Legal Adviser.

(8) S. A. Ayer—(Publicity & Propaganda)

Lt. Col. Azir Ahmed, Lt. Col. N. S. Bhagat, Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt. Col. Gulzara Sing, Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani, Lt. Col. A. D. Loganathan, Lt. Col. Ehssan Qudir, A. M. Sahah, Secretary (with Ministerial Rank)

At the end of the meeting the Indian National anthem was sung :

Sadeada Sukha chain Ki barasha Ashu barashe.

Bharata bhag hai jaga Jayoho-Jayoho-Jayoho
Jaya Jaya Jaya Jayaho,

As soon as Azad Hind Government was formed, it obtained the sanction of nine Free States and secured a place of honour. This was formed for

drafting the future constitution of India when it would become free and without a Government it is not possible to conduct freedom's battles. As a mark of appreciation General Tojo also ceded the two islands the Andamans and Nicobar islands which had been taken from the British by Japan and upon occupation, these two were now named as *Saheed Dweep* and *Swaraj Dweep*. In December Netaji came here and hoisted the tri-coloured Indian National Flag on the 3rd December, 1943. A few days after the above two islands were formally made over to him on February 17, 1944. Netaji Bose then appointed Col. Loganathan as the Chief Commissioner of the islands.

Unlike the Government of Burma, the Azad Hind Government had an individuality which distinguished it from a puppet Govt. . It had of course no palatial houses and Secretariats, but it controlled its own administration without any help from Japan. It maintained its activities by collecting donations from Indians throughout East Asia. The collections were kept in the National Bank of Azad Hind which was opened in Rangoon by the Provisional Government in April, 1944. It had its own currency and stamps and it was recognised by other independent states.

Subhas Bose would be the last man to act as

A tool in the hands of others. To quote an instance as to how he maintained his dignity when a Japanese Ambassador sought his interview, he treated him exactly as the Russian Ambassador had done with his companion Bhagatram at Kabul. The Jap Ambassador left his credentials at home but Subhas Bose refused audience with him until those reached within the next few days. It has been puzzling to many of our countrymen and foreigners outside as to whether or not Subhas acted as an independent man or a quisling of Japan. To clear all misconceptions, the author would place the evidence of the impartial officers of the Jap Government examined as defence witnesses during the trial of Col. Shaw Nawaj and others on December 8, 1945.

Mr. Sabura Ohta of the Japanese Foreign office swears :

"The Provisional Free Government of Free India was proclaimed on October 21, 1943. The Japanese Government treated the Provisional Government as an independent and free Government and wished to render it all possible assistance."

Witness Mr. Ohta produced a copy of the announcement made by the Japanese Board of Information on October 23, 1943. This stated that Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose established the Provisional Government

Azad Hind on October 21, 1943 and the Imperial Japanese Government recognised the new Government on October 23 and declared that every possible assistance on its part would be afforded to the latter for the achievement of its aim, and that he the witness himself drafted the documents.

Witness also produced a copy of the speech made by the Japanese Prime Minister General Tojo before the assembly of Greater East Asiatic Nations on November 6, 1943 which runs thus :

“Now that the foundation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has been solidified till further and the Indian patriots under the same Government are firmly determined to accomplish their steadfast aim, I take this occasion to declare that the Imperial Government of Japan is ready shortly to place the Andaman and Nicobar islands of Indian territory, now under the occupation of Imperial Japanese forces under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind as the initial evidence of her readiness to help in *India's struggle for freedom*. Japan was determined to extend all possible co-operation to India in her fight for freedom. Japan was anxious that the Indians, on their part, should redouble their efforts in that direction.”

Witness said—The Japanese Government decided

to send Mr. Hachiya as diplomatic representative to the Provisional Government of Free India.

Mr. Shunichi Matsumoto Vice Minister for Foreign offices of the Japanese Foreign office corroborates Mr. Ohta and swears :

“Not only the Provisional Azad Hind Government was recognised by Japan but was also recognised by Governments of Croatia, Manchuko, Germany, Italy, Syam, Nanking Govt. and Burma and other allies of Japan.”

He said that he met Subhas Chandra Bose first about April, 1943, in his own official residence in Tokyo. He came from Germany. He remained there for about a month.

Q. Was it the Japanese Government that asked the German Government to send him from Germany ?

A. The Japanese Government made arrangements with the German Govt. to send him to Japan.

Q. What made the Japanese Govt. make that arrangements with the German Government ?

A. The Japanese Government knew that Subhas Bose was working for India's independence. They thought he would help Japan in the War and at the same time they wanted to help him to obtain India's independence.

Q. Do you suggest that the Japanese Government did it of their own accord without being requested to do so by anybody ?

A. The Japanese Government did this at its own instance.

Q. Was recognition of the Free India Government part of Japan's War strategy ?

A. I think the only reason why the Japanese Govt. wanted to recognise the Provisional Government of Free India was to help the Japanese War effort.

Q. What was the Japan's War aims as regards India ?

A. The Japanese War aim as regards India was to make India independent.

Now as to how money was collected—

In the course of a speech at Sradhananda Park, Calcutta on April 30, 1946, Major General Shah Nawaz referred to the British propaganda that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had collected money for Azad Hind Fouz Fund by extortion. The reverse was the truth, he said, "People of all classes had most gladly contributed their might for the noble cause." Indeed lacs and crores were collected by voluntary collection for the Azad Hind Bank at Rangoon, lakhs were contributed by Indian merchants.

In many instances people had given lakhs of rupees and all their precious belongings. Women members of their families joined the *Rani of Jhansi* regiment and children the *Bal Senadal*.

Two such men who had made great sacrifices for the Azad Hind Fouz were Mr. Betai and Khanna who were presented before the meeting. They had big business in Burma and had given several lakhs of rupees each for the Indian National Army. In recognition of their sacrifice Netaji had given them a title of "*Sevak-e-Hind*". Merchants of Malay and Singapore also gave profusely.

From the evidence of Mr. S.A. Ayer given on December 11, '43 we further find some instances how the Provisional Government was running on terms of equality with the Jap Govt.

(1) In March, 1944, there was a Conference between Subhas & Japan, the latter suggested a Japanese Chairman for the War Co-operation Council which was to be set up in connection with operations to be carried out on the Indian soil. Subhas resisted it on principle that such an appointment would meet with no approval of the Indian people and made a counter-suggestion for an Indian Chairman. In consequence no Chairman either Japanese or Indian was

appointed, and both sides met on a footing of absolute equality.

(2) The Japanese insisted on an advance intimation before Ministers of Supply and other men power of the Provisional Government were actually made. Subhas Bose contended that it was an internal matter and as a matter of courtesy information might be given after appointments are made. He maintained that attitude to the last.

(3) Bose made it clear in a scheme drawn up for the administration of liberated areas that none but the Azad Hind Bank would be functioning there and no Japanese Bank would be allowed to move there.

AZAD HIND FEMALE CORPS

After Rash Behari Bose formed the 'Indian Independence League' in 1942, Penang and Singapore joined the League in August, 1942 and organised a Female corps. A subcommittee was formed with some women with the object of making propaganda work and collecting money and clothes for the poor. They were also given some military training and Miss Lakshmi Swaminatham (Lady Doctor) was the Secretary. At first 43 girls joined and branches were opened throughout Malayas. Their main work was *Seva* (service). When Subhas took over the charge of Azad Hind Fouz and became the Chairman of the Council of Actions, he spoke in a meeting of women at Singapore and conceived the idea of starting 'Rani of Jhansi Regiment' here, when he found Women Corps of the Indian Independence League saluted him with guns in a military fashion.

After his suggestion, a training camp was opened with Miss Lakshmi at the head when 120 girls joined it, with her rank as Captain and when the Provisional Government was formed on October 21, she was also made a Minister. They were trained in jungle and guerilla warfare and the Nursing Home grew very

much in importance.* Bela Dutta, Reba Sen, Sipra Sen, Maya Ganguli were some of the Bengali girls who joined the Corps.

We thus find that although Netaji got the support of Japanese arms and ammunition and trained the army under Japanese technique of war, yet his individuality was his own. The Indian National Army as re-organised more vigorously now declared war against England and America as an ally of the Axis powers. War was waged in Kohima, Imphal and Arakan fronts. The fight which was valiant was entirely by Indians on Indian soil and for India's liberation. In January, 1944, the seat of the Provisional Government was removed to Rangoon. It was determined on February 4, 1944 that the Azad Hind Fouz would begin its march against Imphal, the capital of the Manipur State. They achieved success for a time. Kohima and some other places were under their occupation, but as soon as the army crossed the death valley from Kalwa to Kohima, Dame Nature seemed to war against it. Heavy rains set in for days and days together and hunger and starvation stared the unlucky band in their face. Food was wanting, drinking water was not available and many had to live for days upon grass and leaves

* Mrs. Ponnier's statement, Vide Ananda Bazar Patrika, March 18, 1946.

and hundreds faced death. Yet hunger, exhaustion did not bend them to surrender and the brave men proceeded on, resolved rather to die than go back to the side of the English. Leaflets poured in, promises of generals were broadcast, hopes of former honour and privileges were held out but they would not give way. Their bayonet and rifles were no doubt poor and were mere toys in face of modern war-weapons of the other side but held they on, with sheer power of will and force of idealism. Yet there was no surrender. Their movement really made the Second Front as Netaji himself used to say. Of his soldiers too, he prided—

“I challenge the whole world to show an army like mine, which can fight against such odds and with so poor weapons. We have faced German Tanks with bayonets and exploded tanks with man-mines. Our plans were foiled owing to untimely and incessant rains, and had to retire to gain time.”

Major General Shah Nawaz also says, “We were poorly armed while opponents had cannon and tanks, but we were always inspired by our Netaji who told that he had nothing but hunger, thirst and death to give us. The liberation of the mother country demanded our blood, he said, and we all promised

Netaji to sacrifice everything for the liberation of the mother country."

It is no occasion to give here the details of the fighting in those months through all the above difficulties, which history only will record, but what Subhas did was—he returned to Rangoon in May and June, 1944. He went round all places and gave words of encouragement to the soldiers who were at last showing signs of collapse. He told them, "I am a penniless Fakir. I have nothing to give you except hunger, forward advance and death. I have nothing to give you."* He made the last effort and formed a vigorous party on August 21, 1944 who would not yield, but would rather die. But they could hold no longer. Food was wanting and if any help was sought from the Japanese, the only reply was to ask them to commit suicide. On the other hand, Indian soldiers of the allies began to taunt them as quislings and induce them to come. Some began to desert and join them, but others remained firm facing death.

The army had to fight against such odds.

For the Axis powers, fates too turned against them in all quarters.

* P. G. Samson, Body-guard of Netaji, says on U. P. representative.

Major Abid Hossain, Personal Assistant of Netaji and Major N. G. Sami, Staff Officer of the Intelligence Department.

Vide Ananda Bazar Patrika, April 13. 1946.

On April 23, 1945 the Japanese began to evacuate Rangoon which fell to the British and Netaji was persuaded by his ministers to leave against his wishes, but he addressed his men :

"India needs a new tradition. There are great men in East Asia and inside India. They will carry on the fight, and fighting to the last and set example to others. So far as I am concerned I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on Oct. 21, 1943 to do all in my power to serve the wishes of 38 crores of life."

But as his was a precious life, his followers and ministers made him leave the Burmese soil which fell to the hands of the Anglo-American army. He left Rangoon on the last day of evacuation by the Japanese and had transferred his Government to Bangkok.

Rash Behari Bose too left Singapore with a broken and dejected heart and left for Tokyo. The shock was too great for his age and nerve to bear. He fell ill and in that most despondent state of mind died of Pulmonary troubles.

I shall no longer keep my readers in that gloomy atmosphere, but shall digress on a few details.

Under Netaji Subhas, there was no question of any sort of communalism. Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs all worked together and there was no communal problem to bother about : Major General Shah Nawaz says—

"For three years we were in Azad Hind Government, we were all united and our differences disappeared. We used to sit, dine, sleep together, as if we were members of the same family."

We shall pause here to quote an instance as to how Netaji loved his followers. They have thus related :

"When at Miang of Rangoon in February, 1945 there were intense air-raids and the hospital of a four-storied building with a big Red-Cross flag flying over it was also subjected to firing. Netaji hurried to the place although in one place his car had a collision and went to the hospital only to see two hundred followers of his out of six hundred lying dead and some wounded. He was dazed to see the sight and tears flowed through cheeks in torrents. He had great love and affection for them and was seen nursing whenever anybody required any help."

Twice there was attempt on the life of Netaji—once in February, 1944 and a few days after a second time. Two sets of guards used to attend on him at Singapore, Biswambar Doyal of Bahadur group was the leader. Outside the yard five dressed in mufti used to stay, and eight used to stay inside in uniforms. They used to be changed every hour. An unknown stranger was mixed with the guards but was caught when the head man suspecting something wrong made them stand in

a file and called out the names and numbers. He found the suspect with a revolver in his possession and was immediately put under arrest. The man confronted, and he confessed that he came to take the life of Netaji. Netaji afterwards ordered him to be set at liberty. Another man informed him once that a motor car was waiting with Rash Behari Bose to see him. Subhas knew that Adviser Bose was then in Tokyo and could not be at Singapore. It was soon seen that the motor was no longer seen in the yard.

Now about the subsequent history of Subhas, Major General A. C. Chatterjee met Netaji last on June 6, 1945 at Bangkok when the latter sent him to Siam to collect funds for the Provisional Government.

Now Hirohita the Emperor of Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, 1945. It was inevitable that Subhas also would have to surrender. On the 16th he is said to have started from Singapore and reached Bangkok on the 17th August thence he flew to Saigon where he spent the night. At Saigon the Japanese officer informed that a special was going from that place to Japan on the 18th August, but only two seats were available for Netaji. He was accompanied by Col. Habibur Rahaman in that and Hasan and the rest of the staff left subsequently in another plane.

The above plane carrying Subhas and Rahaman is said to have crashed and Subhas was seriously injured. He had to be removed to the hospital where he was reported to have died shortly after. Two days after the accident Habibur having gone to enquire about him was told that Subhas had succumbed to the injuries. Habibur Rhaman was the only person and friend who carried the ashes to Tokyo and is now amongst us to tell the facts as happened. We have however, not been favoured with any public statement from him, which we hope will soon come out.

Report of the cremation and subsequent carrying of the ashes to Tokyo was subsequently made through Japanese News Agency. With the surrender of Japanese forces in Malaya, Bankok and Siam the I. N. A. had to surrender to the British in Sept., 1945.

EIGHTH CHAPTER

IS SUBHAS DEAD OR ALIVE ?

"Is Subhas dead or alive ?" has been the question that is puzzling all but still remains unsolved. Everybody would wish him back in India and I know of hundreds, young and old who would at once flock to his standard, if he is seen again in flesh and blood. Most people consider that like the last occasion when he had been reported killed on the coast of Japan, the very day he really arrived at Berlin on March 28, 1942 and again reported shortly after that he was alive, this time too like the former one, the report of his death would not be true. Our readers might remember how on that occasion both Gandhiji and Rashtrapati Azad expressed condolence to Subhas's mother but within a short time wired—"Thank God, what purported to be authentic has proved to be wrong". As on the last occasion, people believe that they would this time also, sooner or later get the news that he is alive. Most of the followers of Netaji in the army who are back do not believe the story of his death, and some consider that he is in Manchuria waiting for an opportunity to cross the Indian frontier with his army. Dr. Iqram Hossain who claimed to have been treating Subhas for liver and

intestinal troubles stated the other day at a public meeting on April 4 (1946) that after the report of his death, he received a telegram from his (Subhas's) personal adviser stating that he was alive and retired to a safe place. Some say that they heard him on the Radio and at one time Gandhiji also believed that he was alive.

Mr. Alfred Wag the special correspondent of the Chicago Tribune has recently published that some days after the accident Subhas was seen at Saigon and it was possible for the Anam Government to shelter one of I. N. A.*

But all these do not prove that he is alive. If there were any proof of his existence *i.e.*, if anybody saw him personally or got his letter or heard him speak of recent events, the question of death would not have come at all.

There is the other side of the medal that is he is dead, and let us see if the story of death is based upon any strong foundation.

As we stated before, he took up a plane on August 18, 1945 to fly to Tokyo. After that he was not reported to be at any place but the following news got publicity in London through Japanese News



Netaji Subhas reading the Proclamation on Oct. 21, 1943
Col. A. C. Chatterjee & Col. Kiani by his side.



Sahitya Samrat **Bānkrīm Chāndrā**, Rishi of
"Bahdemataram" who influenced
the whole current of Indian
thought towards
Nationalism.

Agency Report on August 23, 1945 just a few days after the accident :

"He was seriously injured when his plane crashed at Taihoku airfield on August 18, at 14. 00. He was given treatment in a hospital in Japan, where he died at midnight. Lt. General Tsundamasa Shidi was instantly killed and Colonel Habibur Rahaman, Mr. Bose's Adjutant and four other Japanese officers were injured in the crash".

Again on October 31, 1945 an eye-witness is said to have stated to the United Press of America staff correspondent Lashi Nakshimi at Tokyo that he was a passenger with ten others in the Japanese Army bi-motored bomber in which Bose and the staff officer Habibur Rahaman were flying to Japan.

It proceeds—

"Arrived at Taihoku at 2 P.M. Half an hour later the plane began the final leg of the trip and had hardly gained an altitude of 300 ft. after just clearing the runway when there was an explosion. One propeller of the broken plane began wobbling and although the pilot tried to hold the plane steady, it crashed at the edge of the airfield, fires started at both ends of the plane.

"Bose in uniform was sitting to the left, immediately behind the pilot, while Rahaman was seated behind Bose. Suffering a head injury and covered with flaming gasoline, Bose rushed from the plane and tried to rip off his uniform. Rahaman though his hands were burning, succeeded in removing most of Bose's clothing.

"Within 15 minutes an ambulance picked up Bose and Rahaman who lay near the flaming plane.

"Bose was conscious for six hours until he died. Rahaman, lying in bed next to Bose was severely burned about the hands and face but recovered sufficiently to leave the hospital three weeks later.

"Rahaman requested that Bose's body be taken to Tokyo but the coffin which the Japanese prepared was over six feet long and could not be taken in the plane. The body was then cremated at Taihoko on August 22 and Rahaman took the ashes to Tokyu where the Indian community held funeral services on September 14, at the Reukoju Temple Suginami."

(U .P. America)

Mt. T. Hachiya (formerly the Japanese Embassy in London, then Japanese member of Bose's Provisional Government) expressed the belief that the report of

Bose's death in an air accident was probably correct.

On November 21, 1945 the Japanese Army Head Quarters from Taihoku confirmed Subhas's death at Matsuyama airfield. They state :

"Bose came on August 18 at 2 P.M. without previous arrangement and seemed to desire secrecy regarding his movement because he did not talk to any Japanese official. As the plane cleared the run-way, the propeller came off and the transport dived into a brick factory where it burned.

"Bose died the following morning and was delirious until his death. His last words were a request for morphine to ease his pain."

The above story and confirmation were considered by Mahatma Gandhi who expressed that something within told him that Subhas was alive. This gave rise to a lot of speculation that Gandhiji must have been credibly satisfied about his existence and the belief of those who wish him to be alive had been gaining ground, till at last Mahatmaji after he saw Colonel Habibur Rahaman has openly declared that he is convinced that Subhas is no longer alive. Gandhiji must have seen that part of Habibur's person and heard his story which having regard to the occasion

and circumstances and manner of delivery must have convinced him.

But however trustful Habibur may be, the Tokyo Indians have not been convinced of Subhas's death for the following reasons—

- (1) Habibur's arrival and presence at Tokyo were kept secret.
- (2) Some students wanted to know where the ashes were kept and after they saw some ashes, asked when the funeral would be held. They were told that all the Indians would be informed in due time. But to their surprise none was informed and news appeared two days after that funeral had been performed.
- (3) No photo had been taken of the dead man.
- (4) His belongings were not presented to prove some identity.
- (5) His companion (Habibur) might have been injured elsewhere. At any rate his injuries do not prove Subhas's injury.
- (6) Japs honour the dead more than they do the living persons, but in this case there were no ceremonies and everything was quiet.

All these throw suspicion on the issue of death, and to a legal mind it cannot but appear that evidence as to death is shaky and not at all conclusive. *Non-proof of the fact that he is alive does not prove death.* Besides Habibur Rahman the only friend at that time was not present at the cremation and as no other person who had seen the body cremated has made any statement, the *factum of death has not been proved beyond all shadow of reasonable doubt.* Even the detailed statement of October 31, 1945 comes from one who does not like to disclose his identity and as such it is valueless. Hearsay is no evidence and ashes do not prove cremation. Besides the evidence as to the time and place of death is conflicting. Report of August 23, 1945 states that death happened at midnight. Report of 31st October states that death took place at about 8 P. M. and the third one of Nov. 21st states that he died in the following morning. As to place also, August 23 report says : he was given treatment in a hospital in Japan and October 31, implies that death was not in Tokyo. A contemporaneous statement shows Habibur was in another place when Subhas died whereas statement of Oct. 31, shows Rahaman was in a bed next to Bose's.

The place is not mentioned anywhere and if the August 23 report is correct, why should Bose have

been removed to Japan (if Tokyo was not the place) and not taken to any nearest hospital in Taihoku or some place in Corea, nearest about. There is also no point why should Subhas Bose leave Singapore or Bangkok or Saigan for Japan when Japan had already surrendered. We donot hear of any first aid also. The most important and suspicious circumstance is that there has been no photo while he was wounded or when he was dead, or when he was to be cremated, nor the belongings of Bose were also photographed to give some idea of his death.

From all these facts and circumstances we cannot come to any conclusion that Subhas is no more, as the proof is far wanting beyond the stage of mere suggestion or suspicion only. We shall not thus be surprised if one fine morning Subhas is seen standing before us in flesh and blood, to the joy of all. May that happy day come soon !

ELEVENTH CHAPTER

CONCLUSION

We have finished the small narration about a great personality. We should now assess the real value of the Azad Hind Fouz of which he was the towering figure, in relation to the principles and objects of the Indian National Congress. The object of course is same and even while outside India, the Azad Hind Fouz had always paid due regards to the Indian National Congress as the only representative organisation, working for the goal of Independence.

But we shall clear some misapprehensions. The first was that to Subhas the ideal of Swami Vivekananda was the chief ideal from his boyhood. But Subhas was an out and out disciple in mind and practice of Desh-bandhu too. How could the two kinds of devotion be reconciled? Subhas himself gave the explanation. I remember to have attended a meeting of the students

held at "Chinsura *Neoti Mandir* where he clearly spoke before them on 28th July, 1929 the following :—

"The unity which Ramkrishna and Vivekananda established between One and Many in the spiritual world, Deshabandhu achieved or tried to achieve in the life of the Nation. In one word he firmly believed in the Federation of Cultures and in the realm of Politics he (Deshabandhu) liked a Federal State of India in preference to a Centralised State".

This was the development in Subhas's mind and we may judge from it the events of to-day also. Readers will now be able to fully appreciate the freedom of provinces being federated into a whole and the futility of the *grouping of provinces which is entirely against the principle of Federation of autonomous provinces* as hoped for by *Deshabandhu and followed by his disciple Subhas Chandra*.

But has Subhas deviated from the path of the Congress and although a great adherent and staunch follower of Deshbandhu Das, has he (Subhas) run counter to his (Deshbandhu's) principles ?

The following words of Deshbandhu uttered in 1922 from the presidential chair of the Gaya Congress, where Subhas was by his side as the Secretary of the

President, will form the main chapter of the history and development of Indian Nationalism and we can not help quoting only a few lines as lessons for the future sons and daughters of India. Deshbandhu gave our ideal and methods thus shortly :—

“What is the ideal which must be set before us? The first and the foremost is the ideal of Nationalism. Now what is Nationalism? It is, I conceive, a process through which a nation expresses itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations, but as part of a great scheme, by which in seeking its own expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realisation of other nations as well; Diversity is as real as unity. And in order that the unity of the world may be established, it is essential that each nationality should proceed on its own line and find fulfilment in self-expression and self-realisation. The nationality which I can speak of must not be confused with conception of nationality as it exists in Europe to-day. Nationalism in Europe is an aggressive nationalism, a selfish nationalism, a commercial nationalism of gain and loss.

: : : :

“The great Indian Nationality is in sight. It already stretches its hands across the Himalayas not only to Asia but to the whole of the world not aggressively but to demand its recognition and to offer its contribution. I desire to emphasise that there is no hostility between the

idea of nationality and that of world-peace. A full and unfettered growth of notionalism is necessary for world-peace just as full and unfettered growth of individuals is necessary for nationality. It is the conception of aggressive nationality in Europe that stands in the way of world-peace, but once the truth is grasped that it is not possible for a nation to inflict a loss on another nation without at the same time inflicting a loss on itself, the problem of humanity is solved. The essential truth of nationality lies in this that it is necessary for each nation to develop itself, express itself and realise itself.

: : : : :

"I now come to the question of method. I have to repeat that it has been proved beyond any doubt that the method of *non-violent non-co-operation is the only method which we must follow to secure a system of Government which may in reality be the foundation of Swaraj*.....I can not refuse to acknowledge that there is a body of Indian opinion within the country as well as outside according to which the only way in which Swaraj can ever be attained is by the application of force and violence. I do not for a moment question the courage, sacrifice and patriotism of those who hold this view. But may I be permitted to point out that apart from the question of principle, *History has proved over and over again the utter futility of revolutions brought about by force and violence. I am one of those who hold to non-violence on principle.*"

The above political principles laid down by his

Guru as axioms ought to make our path steady and straight for the attainment of the goal and looked at from this standard, Subhas's flight to a foreign country, be it Russia, or Germany, would not be consistent with those.

At the same time the psychology of Subhas's mind has to be thoroughly studied and taken stock of. As he styled himself as a great Leftist, he could not see eye to eye with the Congress principles. Congress has its own view-point and could only say "You can proceed thus and no further". He could not thus conscientiously confine himself within the line. But his patriotism and the earnestness for the freedom of his country were yet burning in him. He felt and expressed that he was unjustly dealt with by the government and what is more, not less by the very Congress which he had led twice as Rashtrapati and which had also been hard upon him. Under such circumstances should he—one by himself—not only in jails year after year and yet would not find any scope to work even when he would be out of it, or should he try some other channel which could bring the fruition of his cherished goal of Independence, and for the attainment of which he could give everything unreservedly, make any kind of sacrifice and sacrifice of life was to him the least part of it. *His case was*

peculiar, extraordinary and cannot apply to any other person. Looked at from this psychological point of view, and as he thought it best to run away from India, he left it. His inner call was to find work and remedy elsewhere and Providence helped to give him a sphere where he could fully express himself in the best way possible. If he found handicaps in India, here he could fully assert himself and there was no restraint on him from any side.

The next question is, did he act as an independent man or as a Quisling of axis powers, that is, was he prompted by the love of his country or hatred to the British. I have already explained exhaustively that he was independent of any power in mind, thought and behaviour and there was no love for the Japs but all love for his country. So there was no question of hatred to any body or nation. Thus, he ran, got opportunity, organised and made endeavours like any other patriot of the world. But he knew that this path was possible for peculiar circumstances for the time being only, when there was no other way for him but to lead his followers to struggle in the battle field, and he knew fully that success or failure whatever might come, the next place of resort would and must only be the *Indian National Congress and India's*

liberation lies there alone. It is for this, he not only spurned General Tojo's request for the overlordship of India when India would be free, as Mahatma Gandhi, Moulana Azad and Pandit Nehru are there but also his persistent advice to his followers was always to bow down to the Congress inside India, and follow it as disciplined soldiers as they had been under him and work up for the ideal which his Guru Deshbandhu had lived and fought for and with which Mahatmaji had been for the last twenty five years leading the people. For the time being, no doubt he went *out of the orbit, but there is no doubt that his mind was always fixed on the Congress.* He worked for independence first and always through the Congress and there-after while circumstances brought him away from out of the sphere of the Congress, there too he fought at the cost of his life for the liberation of the country which has also been the object of the Congress. And if he is not here with us to-day, other heroes of Azad Hind Fouz are now the best workers of the Congress, pledged to the path of the Congress and following the leaders of the Congress like trained soldiers. There is no doubt that the place of the patriots of the world would also be a place for him. Indeed in him we find *Bankim's Jivananda personified who is sure to rest by the side of his master Deshbandhu who was both a Satyananda and Maha-*

purush combined, a Sivaji and Ramdas put together. May Deshbandhu have his disciple by his side if Subhas is in Heaven, or have blessings on him if he is alive, so that he may lead the Indians once again in the struggle to attain India's freedom. Let us all in joined hands and sincere devotion pray like *Bankim Chandra* to the Great Mother :

"Oh, Mother, our Janmabhumi, when will you have again a real son like Jivananda or our Subhas Chandra ?"

BANDE MATARAM.

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